The WESTMINSTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S QUARTERLY

International Uniform Lessons

October, November, December, 1924

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HARNESSING AN UNUSED FORCE

BY FRANK D. GETTY

A subject for discussion in a recent meeting of the Presbyterian Sunday School Superintendents' Association of Philadelphia was "Harnessing an Unused Force." The real purpose of the discussion was to learn whether there exists in the evangelistic program of the school a place for young people, and, if that place exists, how the young people can be challenged to fill it. This subject is of vital interest to the young people themselves, as well as to Sunday-school superintendents.

Evangelism for Young People

Any concern which we may have for the future of our Church will direct us to the importance of winning as many young people as possible as Church members. Young people should realize the importance of winning other young people. A few moments of reflection will reveal the fact that a large number of young people move to other communities, and in other ways are lost to the church in future years, which makes it necessary to get as many young people as possible now, in order to have a sufficient number of adults later on. Evangelism for young people, therefore, is simply a safeguard for the source of supply.

Evangelism by Young People

The young people of our Protestant churches constitute the greatest unused force which we have. If an amount of enthusiasm, initiative, and ability to carry responsibility corresponding to that manifested in the affairs of the public schools and colleges could be secured for the Church, greater progress would be made by Christianity in one year than has been made in any ten years of the Church's history. There is no reason why young people should not be just as enthusiastic about worth-while things in their church as they are about the books they read and the parties they attend. Many young people would be won immediately to the Church if we showed even a reasonable amount of enthusiasm. It is possible, however, to go further. In many instances young people have found it possible

to ask other young people in a very practical, unemotional way to become Christians and to accept Christ as Saviour. The results of these invitations prove that young people have in them a tremendous power which has never been used by or for the Church. The success which will follow in genuine effort made here, will result in such enthusiasm that many will wonder why efforts have not been made before to develop evangelism by means of young people.

Through Classes

The regular Sunday-school class is usually the most natural grouping we have in a church. Sometimes a young people's society exceeds the class as a natural group. Either organization might well adopt an evangelistic program. The success of the program should be increased because the members of the class or of the society know one another well enough to encourage and advise when encouragement and advice are needed. In some of the group meetings time can be given to a study of the methods of personal evangelism. Membership campaigns might be supplanted by campaigns to win other young people to Christ rather than merely into the membership of the organization. One class changed its motto from "A New Member Every Sunday" to "A New Christian Every Sunday." The results were about four times greater with this new motto than when the efforts were merely for selfish, material interests. Each class is a natural working unit, with, in most cases, the teacher as an adult adviser.

By Individuals

Although the class may make the program and the work may be considered class activities, the individual will have to render the actual service. Sometimes approaches to young people out of the Church can be made by groups of two or three, but the work on the whole will be equal only to the sum of the work done by each individual member. In addition to the class or society prayer list, each individual should have such a list. There should also be the realization that this is the most practical and helpful type of Christian service, for it is doing the work which any Christian might reasonably be expected to do.

A Guiding Committee

In order to secure unity of action among the various classes or societies in the church, it might be well to have a general committee which would make plans for the entire group. As a result of the superintendents' meeting in Philadelphia, one of the superintendents called a special meeting of the young people of his school. An unusually large percentage responded. When the plans for this type of evangelistic work were presented, there was an immediate, favorable response. A committee composed of young people was appointed. It

is proceeding with the organization of all the classes for this immediate work. The best argument which can be presented for evangelism for and by young people is that found in the records of places where it has been tried. It would be well if all the schools would proceed to use this power which has been too long neglected.

EACH CLASS SHOULD HAVE A COMPLETE PROGRAM

BY FRANK D. GETTY

Experience has proved to those who have been working in the Young People's Department of our Sunday schools that something more than a teaching period of an hour or less each week is necessary in order to challenge the interest of the young people. The invariable answer to the question, "How can we keep young people in the Sunday school," is "Give them more to do." In order to give young people more to do, more time is needed than can be made available in the Sunday session of the class. Some suggestions have been that the young people be given more responsibility in the conduct of the worship service of the school or that they be given opportunity to serve as officers of the school. These suggestions are all right as far as they go. The main difficulty is that in carrying out these suggestions only a small number of young people can be reached. In order to present the challenge to the largest number we must turn to the class, and so enlarge its program that the entire group of young people will be enlisted in greater activity.

Whatever program the class adopts should be the result of student initiative rather than of teacher activity. The main responsibility of the teacher is to present the lesson in such a way that the members of the class will be instructed and inspired in the Christian way of living. The teacher should also be a leader and a counselor in other class activities, but the members of the class should carry the largest responsibility in the between-Sunday work of the class. The items which might be suggested for an enlarged class program should not be considered as substitutes for the regular Sunday-school lesson. These lessons should be carried on as usual, and most of the extra work should be done during the week or possibly in an extended period on Sunday. Nor should a class attempt to do all of the work at one time. The program which is suggested in connection with this article might be used to cover a period of from one to two or even three years. It would be well to have a committee on program which would study the items suggested and decide what could be done from month to month.

The following program is by no means complete; it is simply a suggestion of the type of work that a young people's class can do in addition to the study of the regular lesson. Undoubtedly it will suggest other items arising out of local needs, which should be included in the class program.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASS OR CLUB

Bible

Study of "How We Got Our Bible," by Smyth.
Study of "The Women of the Bible."
Study of "The Men of the Bible."

Missions

Practical service to mission stations, schools, hospitals, and so on. (Get information from Mission Boards.)

Church History

Have speakers on:
"History of the Early Christian Church."
"History of the Presbyterian Church."
Have discussion of:
Duties of Church Members.

Worship

Study of use of music, Scripture, prayer, and speaking in worship.
Practice in conducting worship service in club.

Service

As individuals, find ways to help in the home.

As individuals and as a group, find ways to help in the church: Daily Vacation Bible School, children's classes in the Sunday school, Junior Christian Endeavor, and as the pastor may suggest.

As a group, find ways to serve in the neighborhood: English classes for foreign-speaking people, hospitals, homes, other young people away from home, shut-ins, and so on.

Religious Art

Find, study, and discuss religious pictures, the place of music in the Church in Old Testament times, the place of music in the Church in New Testament times, the place of music in the Church to-day, the history of great hymns of the Church, drama and pageantry in the Early Church and in the Church to-day, religious poetry.

Social

Parties and festivals on holidays and for various seasons: entertainments, plays and pageants, hikes, picnics, and so on. Prepare a list of worth-while amusements for use in the home, encourage use of home games, and conduct socials for other groups in the church.

Recreation and Health

Athletic games and teams.
Organized play (indoor and outdoor).
Discussion of rules of health.
Brief study of first aid.
Discussion of the responsibility of Christians for maintaining the health of individuals and the community.

Further suggestions regarding available material and courses of study can be secured from YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

OPEN WIDE THE DOOR

BY M. JOSEPHINE PETRIE

"Some one's knockin' at yo' do'!
Why doan yo' ansaw?"

The old Negro spiritual has a ringing message for us at the beginning of this last quarter of the year's Sunday-school lessons. In the preceding quarters we have heard the personal call through the "do' " of opportunity. Was our "do' " kept tight shut? Did we even look through the keyhole at the groups waiting on the outside for an answer?

See them! Hear them! Among our friends there are those whose vision of the world task of the Church needs to be enlarged. We can help them by the telling of missionary stories, by reading from a book of missionary adventure, or even by showing them pictures. There are children waiting for a Sunday-school teacher, for a leader of a Junior society, or a missionary club or other organized group. There are groups waiting for the study of one or more of the fascinating textbooks prepared for the mission-study classes of the fall and winter.

There are also willing but struggling leaders "knockin' " for help. Your ability as an artist may aid them in making clever posters, programs, and invitations. Your dramatic ability is needed for coaching a missionary play or pageant and for taking part yourself. There are folks "knockin' at yo' do' " for guidance in a missionary-reading contest. Books, magazines, and leaflets should be recommended for them, and a goal set, a time limit suggested, "points" given for the various kinds of reading, and plans made for reporting at a winter conference or the next presbyterial meeting. Perhaps some interested person would present a good missionary book as an award for the greatest number of points, if you would take the trouble to ask for it.

There are young people who are ready to share in the task if only they are shown the bigness of it, the splendid contribution they may make, and the fact that the success of the missionary enterprise depends on the whole-hearted coöperation of each individual.

This quarter brings us to Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, and gives an opportunity for very definite presentation of missions through use of the special Sunday-school programs provided by the Boards. To make these services the "best ever," have committees for announcements, decorations, music, and so on. A poster contest would arouse interest.

A few workable and successful plans may offer ideas to be developed in the Sunday schools. In one Sunday school the Missionary Committee tried a missionary-textbook contest. Six classes were assigned a chapter each, and one member, chosen by the class, gave a review of each chapter before the school. Two points were neces-

sary for the highest marks: (*a*) Most instructive; (*b*) most interesting.

In another Sunday school a contest for the "best missionary story" was very profitable. Selections might be made from any missionary book or leaflet. Credits were given according to the: (*a*) Method of telling; (*b*) freshness of the incident; (*c*) the interest shown by listeners.

One ingenious young woman made the history of missions in our country extremely interesting and impressive by having dolls dressed to represent the leading characters of our missionary history. The dolls were of cardboard, mounted on small blocks of wood. In the same way the several groups for which our Board of National Missions is working could be illustrated (as Indians, Mexicans, and so on).

In the course of working out the church program for another year, all these groups will be "knockin' at yo' do'" this fall. Let's unlock it, turn the knob, open it wide, and respond with a ringing "COME IN."

A FASCINATING EXPLORATION

BY AMOS R. WELLS, LITT.D., LL.D.

Not many portions of this world remain unexplored. In most corners of the earth man is thoroughly at home. No more dark continents remain for Livingstones to light up. It would still be easy for even an experienced traveler to lose himself in the interior of Africa, in Arabia, in Tibet, in northern Siberia, or in the jungles of Brazil, but for the most part, though he might think himself surrounded by leagues of solitude, he is quite likely to stumble upon some human habitation. The great days of geography are over.

But still there remain endless opportunities for exploration, and if anyone feels beating in his wrists the traveler's pulse and is eager for novel scenes and for the conquest of vast domains, I would point him to the realms of the spirit. Right in his own home, and in the course of his ordinary occupations, he can enter upon splendid new continents, and range over imperial territories that man has never before seen.

Of course I am thinking of the world of prayer. It is a very real world. Its soil is firm, its trees are tall and green, its flowers are lovely and abundant, its fields and forests reach to the horizon, its mountains touch the sky, its oceans are illimitable. It offers to the explorer every thrill and every reward.

So enormous is this world of prayer that, though millions of explorers have traversed it, no two have brought from it precisely the same experiences. Each has made his own discoveries, found his own new lands and seas, won from it his own special gains. To each it is a new world, fresh and unspoiled as the morning, wealthy as if no one had ever been there before.

It has been wisely said of travelers that they see what they go prepared to see, and nothing more. That is entirely true of this exploration of the world of prayer. If we start on our journey with the feeling that there is nothing in it, we shall certainly find nothing in it. But if we are sensible enough to believe the countless reports of honorable men who have made the great adventure for themselves, we shall find for ourselves such glories and joys as they have found.

There is a noble excitement in starting out every morning as an explorer of the world of prayer. In the first place, we go with a Companion, for it is irksome to make explorations alone. And this Companion is the bravest, cheeriest, steadiest Associate one could have in such an enterprise. In the second place, though we know not how we shall find it, we can decide in advance what we are to find, talking it over with our Friend. And in the third place, we can simply set forth, perfectly sure that, though the way may be hard, it will be made possible for us as we walk or climb along it, and that at the end we shall reach our chosen goal.

There is nothing else like this. Nothing can beat it for romantic interest, nothing can beat it for substantial achievement. If you want the lure of the unknown, if you want the certainty of satisfaction, if you want power and joy and exhilaration and wealth, set forth on the exploration of prayer, and see what you will find.

WHEN DOUBT TROUBLES US

Doubt is not wrong. Let us admit that to ourselves and to others to begin with. All progress, every forward movement in the world's history has had its rise in some one's doubting that the old was the right way or the best way. Because Columbus doubted the correctness of ancient geography we have the new world. Because Luther doubted the infallibility of the Church of Rome we had the Reformation. But these men did not stop with doubting; had they done so there would have been only two more restless and unhappy souls and mankind would have been none the richer.

Many an honest, earnest, young heart is dismayed at the questions that beset it. From within and from without come suggestions that obscure the sunny faith of childhood and assail long-accepted beliefs. Teachers intent upon their own theories carelessly or purposely sow doubts and uncertainties in the minds of their pupils. Textbooks and magazines either seriously or flippantly contest what others have regarded as established truth, and so it happens that many a young heart, sincerely desiring faith and a Christian life, finds itself bewildered and sorely troubled, fearing that its doubts are sin, yet not knowing how to dispel them, and feeling unfit to undertake any work in the Church or its organizations because of them.

The first thing to do with our harassing doubts is to treat them as we would any other trouble—take them to the Father with whatever measure of faith or unfaith we have, and, telling him the whole story,

ask for help. The next thing is to find a working basis, some firm standing place, however circumscribed it may seem to us, from which we can quietly take up our duties. Some things are always sure, and holding fast to the right we know and doing the best we can, is better than any amount of argument in leading the soul into light. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God," said our Lord. Following the few steps that are clear and plain before us is a sure way to have the path still further revealed. We do not need to lose the comfort of prayer because we do not understand just how God can answer it. We do not understand how certain wires, disks, and vibrations can carry our thoughts to a distant friend, and no one can tell us what electricity is, yet we use the telephone daily and are assured of its service. Shall we believe that wireless messages speed through space from man to man, reaching the points prepared to receive them, and not believe that God sends his messages to the souls that are ready for them?

It is not what we know about our Lord that saves us or makes us his disciples, but knowing him. We may be very orthodox in our creed and yet not be among his followers. We may be perplexed by conflicting teachings and interpretations and uncertain on many points where we would like to be clear, and yet know the Lord Jesus as our daily Companion and Helper, our Saviour. If we follow him, shaping our lives by his teachings and trying to do his will, he will lead us, sooner or later, into all we need to know. Our doubts will disappear or they will cease to trouble us; our perplexing questions will settle themselves as we go along, and we shall grow content to leave the mass of problems in the hands that control the universe.

It is in learning to know the Christ in this constant, everyday companionship that our strength and comfort lie—in sharing with him each joy and sorrow as it comes, and seeking his guidance at each step of the way. The habit of the swift, uplifted thought to him for wisdom, self-control, and courage as the need arises, the quick thanksgiving for each good as it comes, will bring us nearer to our Lord and keep us in closer touch with him than anything else can do. Nor need we fear that anything that interests us will be too small for his notice. A book describing a very devout woman tells that she never allowed anything to interfere with her set hour for devotions. When a letter arrived from a brother in India concerning whose safety and welfare she had been very anxious, her young nieces wonderingly saw her put it aside unopened because her hour for meditation and prayer had come. Surely that was treating her Lord like a formal acquaintance—her Sovereign, perhaps—but not with the dear and intimate friendship to which he invites us. What thanksgiving that letter shared with him might have meant! It is not the length of time spent in prayer nor the rigid observance of hours that make true worship; the habit of sharing every interest with him is the surest way to a peaceful spirit and a happy life.

INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

Lesson I — October 5, 1924

THE CHOICE OF THE TWELVE

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Freely ye received, freely give."—Matt. 10: 8.

TEXT OF LESSON, Matt. 10: 1-8.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

1 And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Si'mon, who is called Pe'ter, and An'drew his brother; James the *son* of Zeb'edee, and John his brother;

3 Phil'ip, and Bar-thol'o-mew; Thom'as, and Mat'thew the publican; James the *son* of Al-phæ'us, and Thad-dæ'us;

4 Si'mon the Ca-na-næ'an, and Ju'das Is-car'i-ot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Je'sus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into *any* way of the Gen'tiles, and enter not into any city of the Sa-mar'it-ans:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Is'ra-el.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

1 And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Si'mon, who is called Pe'ter, and An'drew his brother; James *the son* of Zeb'edee, and John his brother;

3 Phil'ip, and Bar-thol'o-mew; Thom'as, and Mat'thew the publican; James *the son* of Al-phæ'us, and Leb-bæ'us, whose surname was Thad-dæ'us;

4 Si'mon the Ca'naan-ite, and Ju'das Is-car'i-ot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Je'sus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gen'tiles, and into *any* city of the Sa-mar'it-ans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Is'ra-el.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Time—May, A.D. 28. Place—The Horns of Hattin.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M.	September 29.	Matt. 10: 1-8. The Choice of the Twelve.
T.	September 30.	Matt. 4: 18-25. "Fishers of Men."
W.	October 1.	Luke 5: 1-11. Forsaking All.
T.	October 2.	Matt. 9: 9-13. "Follow Me."
F.	October 3.	Mark 5: 35-43. The Inner Circle.
S.	October 4.	John 1: 43-51. Winning One by One.
S.	October 5.	Isa. 40: 1-8. The Gospel Proclaimed.

THE MULTITUDES

There was always a crowd where Jesus was. We read that the multitudes were constantly following him, and we are told of the im-

pression which they made upon him. The verse which precedes our lesson tells that he went about through the villages teaching, preaching, and healing, and that when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them.

What do you think about when you see a great crowd? Jesus did not think of the crowd at all. He thought of the men and the women and the little children who made up the crowd, and who were in need of sympathy and healing and help. In speaking of the multitudes Matthew uses two figures of speech. He thinks of the crowd as a great flock of sheep. The flock was distressed and scattered because there was no shepherd, no leader, no guide. The members of the great mass of people who were following after Jesus did not know where they were going and did not know what they wanted.

The other figure of speech that is used is the harvest. Jesus himself speaks of the multitude as a great harvest field. The seed had been sown, the grain had sprouted and grown, and now the harvest was ready to be reaped, but there were no reapers, and the laborers in the harvest field were few. Jesus felt that he alone was laboring in the great harvest field of humanity, so, speaking to his disciples he said, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

One of the first and greatest things which can be done for the multitudes of men and women and little children who need God, is to pray for them. Something will happen if we pray. When the disciples began to pray that laborers be sent out into the harvest field, their prayer was answered for they themselves were the first to be sent.

To Think About: It is compassion that moves to action. We may be indifferent or we may be interested in a great crowd or in the distress of men and nations, but unless we have a feeling of compassion and sympathy for them we will do nothing. It is the heart that moves the will.

LABORERS WITH HIM

It is interesting to note that in the harmony of the Gospels, which seeks to arrange the material of the four Gospels in chronological order, our lesson takes its place before the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount follows this lesson. Jesus was seeking for laborers, and he found them among his own followers.

That is often true. We are constantly looking for talent, and we neglect the talent that is in our home, our own church, and our own community.

The Gospel of Mark suggests, as does also the Gospel of John, that Jesus gradually gathered the twelve disciples, first one and then another, until the band was complete, and that after they had been with him for a little while, he sent them out on their missionary service. Matthew, however, tells us very little about the Twelve until they were ready to go forth at the command of Jesus, and yet it is

easy to understand that they had been in training for some time before Jesus commissioned them.

They were directly commissioned by Jesus, and their task was outlined for them. They were to have authority over unclean spirits and to heal all manner of disease. Henceforth Jesus would not be the only laborer in the vineyard and the only center of influence; now there would be seven centers, He himself being the one center and the disciples being sent out two by two and forming the other six centers radiating the influence of the gospel message.

To Think About: The disciples were to be trained through service. Telling is not teaching. The best way to teach is to unite telling with service. Some of these disciples had been with the Baptist and with Jesus and had heard from his lips the message of the Kingdom, but they did not even begin to understand the real meaning of that message until they had shared it with others.

TWO BY TWO

We are told in the other Gospels that Jesus sent forth his disciples two by two. Matthew does not explicitly tell us this, and yet he seems to put the disciples in pairs. It makes an interesting study to discover how the Twelve were paired and the influence of one of the pair upon the other.

First of all there is Simon, who is paired with Andrew his brother. They had been fishers together; now they were fishers of men. Another pair of brothers follows: James and John. Philip goes with Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James with Thaddæus; and Simon with Judas. We wonder what sort of man Simon was who was companion to Judas, if, indeed, he was the disciple who was paired with the man who betrayed Christ. In all the lists of the Twelve, Peter is first and Judas is last, and always Judas is described as the man who betrayed his Lord.

This was Jesus' method of organization. It was simple. He sent men out two by two. We have often seen the same effective arrangement in the work of the Church. We think of Moody and Sankey, of John and Charles Wesley, of Luther and Melanchthon. Think out the principle which lies behind the service of two people who go forth on the same gospel mission.

To Think About: The Gospels tell us very little about the success of these twelve men. We know a good deal about Peter and John and James and a little about Andrew and Thomas and Matthew, but on the whole we know very little, and we are led to understand that the gospel is everything, and that the men and women who preach and proclaim it are less important than the message itself.

THE CHARGE TO THE TWELVE

It is necessary to read all of ch. 10 in order to appreciate the full missionary commission which Jesus gave to his twelve disciples. If

it is read in the Revised Version, it will be discovered that it falls into five distinct sections, and if the charge as given in Matthew is compared with the charge as given in Luke, it will also be discovered that the former contains a great deal more.

The commission includes the principles for missionary service. Some of these principles are of temporary value. For example, Jesus charged the disciples not to preach to the Gentiles nor to go into the country of the Samaritans, but to confine their labor to the Jews. This, of course, does not apply to missionary work to-day, for Christ's last command contains the universal note, which ignores all boundaries of race and clan. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

At the same time it is always a good policy to preach the gospel first to those who are nearest to us. It is also a test of our courage and our sincerity. It may be difficult for us to understand why Jesus limited the mission of the disciples, for he himself preached to both Gentiles and Samaritans, and the Great Commission extends to all races. This, however, was the first mission of the disciples, and their field was made definite so that they would not wander about aimlessly. Besides, the great multitudes of shepherdless people appealed to the heart and sympathy of our Lord.

To Think About: One of the primary duties of a church is to minister to the people of the community in which the church is located. One of America's first missionary duties is to Christianize America. If we fail to make America Christian, can we succeed in making India or China Christian?

THE COMMISSION TO SERVE

Jesus gave these first missionaries very strict orders. If you read through the chapter you will find that it contains a fivefold commission. In the first place they were to preach. They were to preach as they went from place to place. The road was to be their pulpit. They were to be evangelists proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God.

In the second place they were to heal the sick. The third command given to them was to raise the dead; the fourth to cleanse the lepers; and the fifth to cast out demons.

It was a ministry of preaching and healing, and is being duplicated even to-day, although in not quite the same way. On every foreign-mission field preaching and healing go hand in hand. The stories of the healing of the leper and the casting out of the demons as told in the literature of modern missions are among the most romantic stories ever told.

To Think About: It is Christ who commissions men. "He is all in all to his people. He is all their strength, wisdom, and righteousness. They are but the clouds irradiated by the Sun and bathed in its

brightness; he is the Light which flames in their gray mist and turns it to a glory. They are but the belts and cranks and wheels; he is the Power. They are but the channel, muddy and dry; he is the flashing Life that fills it and makes it a joy. They are the body; he is the Soul dwelling in every part, to save it from corruption and give movement and warmth.

'Thou art the Organ, whose full breath is thunder;
I am the keys, beneath thy fingers pressed.'"

THE MOTIVE OF SERVICE

The compelling motive which inspired these first missionaries is expressed in the words, "Freely ye received, freely give." The gospel had cost them nothing. They must give it to others freely. They were not to trade or to make commerce of their miraculous power. The springs of service rose because of gratitude to their Lord. The words of the familiar hymn bring this same motive home to us:

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"

To Think About: Read through the chapter and make a selection of missionary principles especially applicable to missionary work to-day.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus separate himself from the twelve disciples in service?
2. Why did Jesus send forth twelve disciples two by two?
3. Would you call these twelve men, great men?
4. What instruction did Jesus give them which was of a temporary nature?
5. What missionary principles did Jesus proclaim which have permanent and abiding value?
6. What is the true motive of all missionary work?
7. Name twelve modern missionaries.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done."—Matt. 6: 10.

TEXT OF LESSON, Matt. 6: 5-15.

For entire lesson, see Matt., chs. 5 to 7.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gen'tiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one.*

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do:* for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Time—Early Summer, A.D. 28. **Place**—The Horns of Hattin.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. October 6. Matt. 5: 1-12. The Beatitudes.
T. October 7. Matt. 5: 13-20. Salt and Light.
W. October 8. Matt. 5: 21-32. Fulfilling the Law.
T. October 9. Matt. 5: 38-48. The Second Mile.
F. October 10. Matt. 6: 5-15. The Perfect Prayer.
S. October 11. Matt. 6: 24-34. God and Mammon.
S. October 12. Psalm 65. Our Gracious God.

THE GREATEST SERMON

The greatest sermon that was ever preached is familiarly called the "Sermon on the Mount." It is great not because of its length but because of its simplicity, its style, its message, and, above all, because of Him who preached it. In reality it is a very short sermon. It can be read in a very few minutes. It occupies three chapters in the Gospel of Matthew, in all, only one hundred and eleven verses, and many of these verses are very short. The sermon as recorded in Luke 6: 17-49 contains only thirty verses.

It is not length that gives a sermon immortality, but the message and thought that it contains. Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" is only a paragraph, and yet it is one of the immortal passages in English literature. It is interesting to note how familiar much of this sermon is and how passages and verses have been taken from it and are known to many who do not recognize them as belonging to the Sermon on the Mount.

Here we find, for example, the Beatitudes, The Lord's Prayer, and the Golden Rule. It contains many sayings which have passed into proverbs: "No man can serve two masters"; "Consider the lilies of the field"; "Seek ye first his kingdom"; "Judge not, that ye be not judged"; "Ask, and it shall be given you"; "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Make a list of the verses which are very familiar to you and which you have known all your life.

To Think About: A recent writer has made a selection of the six greatest sermons that have ever been preached in the English language. One of them is by Horace Bushnell, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God"; one is by Phillips Brooks, "The Fire and the Calf"; one is by John Caird. Think over the sermons you have heard, and discover what is the greatest sermon you ever heard and why you think it was great.

THE GREATEST PREACHER

The preacher of the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus. He had been carrying on his public ministry for a year, and had gathered about him twelve disciples. In our lesson last week we studied his message to them as he sent them forth on their missionary journeys. Immediately after the choice of the Twelve he preached this immortal sermon to the multitude. Sit down and read it through. Read Matt., chs. 5 to 7, and then turn to Luke and read Luke 6: 17-49.

Ask yourself if the sermon has the same effect upon you as it had upon the people who heard it. We are told the influence it had upon the people. Matthew tells us that when Jesus had finished, "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

What do you mean by "authority"? It was not that he challenged

the authority of the scribes or the Pharisess but because Jesus spoke in his own name, and challenged not only the teachings of the scribes but some of the teachings of the Old Testament. This was to them a startling procedure. In Matt. 5:21 Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." Thereupon Jesus said, "But I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

Five times he presents the same standard of authority. "Ye have heard that it was said . . .but I say unto you." "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The standard of authority is Christ himself. He is our Conscience and our supreme Authority.

To Think About: The question of authority in religion is very interesting. Jesus asserted his own authority and challenged the consciences of the people to obey his word rather than the word which they had received from scribes or from prophets or from priests.

THE GREATEST MESSAGE

The message of the Sermon on the Mount is about God and the human soul. It has to do not with politics nor with economics nor with science, but with religion. This is the heart of the sermon. Religion is spiritual. It deals with the heart's relation to God. The Jews had been accustomed to define religion in terms of things external, in the giving of alms, the offering of prayers, and the performance of deeds of mercy and organized religion.

Jesus said religion belongs to the heart. He said "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." He warned his hearers against the display of formal religion. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

The tree that bears good fruit is good in its inner life. The Beatitudes disclose the character of those who belong to the Kingdom of God, and it is character that deals with the inner graces of the soul. The religious life is a life of trust and faith in the eternal God. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

To Think About: "Above all things," Professor Drummond once told the students of Harvard, "do not touch Christianity unless you

are willing to seek the Kingdom of heaven first. I will promise you a miserable existence if you seek it second."

THE GREATEST PRAYER

Embodied in this greatest sermon is the greatest prayer in the world. We call it "The Lord's Prayer." The test of every religion is prayer. Prayer will either kill a man's sin or sin will kill his prayer. Prayer is the linking of our human helplessness to the divine sufficiency. It is the communion of the soul with God. Jesus said that prayer was not a display or a repetition of vain words, but the devotion of the heart given to God.

As a model prayer he gave us The Lord's Prayer. Dr. George Matheson, in speaking on the subject of The Lord's Prayer, has given us this very interesting comparison:

"The Jew cried, 'Hallowed be thy name'; he wanted a God whom men could reverence for his holiness—who charged his very angels with folly, who could not look upon sin but with abhorrence. Two empires have cried, 'Thy kingdom come'—the Chinese and the Roman; they have seen heaven incarnated on a visible throne. The Brahman has cried, 'Thy will be done'; he counts his own will delusion; he wants to lose himself in the Absolute Life. The polytheist of every clime cries, 'Give us this day our daily bread'; his whole use of religion is for the needs of the hour. The Buddhist cries, 'Forgive us our debts'; he trembles lest the consequences of sin may be to bring us back after death to lower forms of being. And the Stoic cries, 'Lead us not into temptation'; his whole desire is to be free from the vain seductions of life—to ignore its jealousies, to scorn its passions, to laugh at its ambitions, to regard its gains and its losses with equal contempt. These are the cries of the old world; and Christ has said, 'Come unto me and I will give you rest!' He has not sent one of them empty away. He has gathered them together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and there will not be one want neglected in his shower of blessings."

To Think About: The Lord's Prayer is the bond which binds all Christians of every denomination together. All Christian people, Protestant and Catholic alike, can unite in saying the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to use. What a wonderful bond of fellowship it is!

THE GREATEST GOSPEL

The Sermon on the Mount points us to the Saviour. It does not give us the complete gospel, for the gospel includes the cross, the resurrection, and the living Christ. The sermon itself, however, cannot be understood without the authority of the preacher behind it. Jesus said, "I say unto you." His word became a mandate, and there are in the sermon impossible demands that cannot be met except by the supernatural grace given to men. Who among us can keep

the last perfect command of this sermon, "Ye therefore shall be perfect"? Who among the children of men can love their enemies unless they have the love of God in their hearts? The house that is builded upon the sand is the life that is founded on the things of this world. The house that is built upon the rock is the house that is founded upon the teachings and the person of Christ himself.

To Think About: There is an interesting story told of Leonardo da Vinci, who painted the famous picture of The Lord's Supper. "When he had painted this wonderful picture he called in one of his friends to see it. He stood back from the canvas with his friend, waiting in silence for his comment on what he himself regarded as his greatest work. His friend's first words were, 'How wonderfully you have painted that silver cup.' The painter immediately took his brush and put a great daub of black paint over it. The friend, in consternation, said: 'Why did you do that?' 'I did that,' he replied, 'because it was the cup which first attracted your attention, and I do not want anything in my work to detract from the central figure of Jesus Christ. I have painted that picture to give men a conception of him, and if you come and fix upon that which is a mere detail in the picture, and so overlook him, it must go.' I could not but feel that the devotion of that painter of early days to Jesus Christ is an an inspiration and an example to me. If my life is to shine for Christ, if Christ is to be the central figure, if Christ is to be seen in me in all his beauty, other things must be painted out, other things must be sacrificed; they must go."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Make a careful comparison of the Sermon on the Mount as given in Matthew and in Luke.
2. Is the Sermon on the Mount a complete interpretation of the Christian gospel?
3. Point out what is distinctive in Jesus' teaching about prayer.
4. What authority did Jesus possess?
5. What passage do you like best in the Sermon on the Mount?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "The sower soweth the word."—Mark 4: 14.

TEXT OF LESSON, Mark 4: 1-9.

For entire lesson, see Mark 4: 1-20.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

1 And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,

3 Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it.

5 And other fell on the rocky *ground,* where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

9 And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

1 And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Time—Autumn, A.D. 28. **Place**—Sea of Galilee.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. October 13. Mark 4: 1-9. Parable of the Sower.
T. October 14. Mark 4: 10-20. "Unto Them . . . in Parables."
W. October 15. Gal. 6: 7-10. Sowing and Reaping.
T. October 16. John 4: 31-38. "White Unto Harvest."
F. October 17. Luke 16: 19-31. The Soul's Harvest.
S. October 18. Luke 20: 9-18. False Husbandmen.
S. October 19. Psalm 1. Fruit and Chaff.

TEACHING BY PARABLES

Jesus is the world's greatest Teacher. This was the unanimous verdict of those who heard him, that he taught not as other men but "as

one having authority." Not only was the material of his teaching different, but his method was different. Henry Drummond used to say, "It is not our business as preachers and teachers to prove things, but to make people see things."

Jesus had this supreme talent of making people see things. All great teaching makes use of the imagination, and he taught by pictures, and by parables. Try to select from the Twenty-third Psalm the different pictures that are present in those few sentences: The "shepherd"; "still waters"; "paths of righteousness"; "the valley of the shadow"; and so on. This was Jesus' method in teaching by parables. Explain the meaning of Mark 4: 11, 12.

A parable is a story which carries with it a moral and spiritual message. It is the Oriental way of teaching. There are suggestions of parables in the Old Testament; for example, the parable of Nathan which he told to David the king. See II Sam. 12: 1-6. The great Indian Christian Sadhu Sundar Singh teaches in parables. Parables are illustrations which enforce the truth, and each parable sets forth one or more great suggestive spiritual lessons.

To Think About: How many parables can you name from memory? What parable do you like best? Name over the parables recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

CHRIST AND THE CROWD

Dr. Stalker in his life of Christ, divides the public ministry into three parts: "The Year of Obscurity"; "The Year of Popularity"; and "The Year of Opposition." Jesus was now in the year of popularity, and the crowd was clamoring for more miracles and more teaching, and the multitude was always at his feet. Now, nothing is so hard to understand as a crowd and nothing is so dangerous as a crowd. Jesus understood the crowd. No one ever understood the crowd so well as he did.

The people followed him, gave him no rest, thronged him until his only place of peace was in a boat, and yet he was never carried away or deceived by the crowd. It was the crowd that swept Mohammed off his feet but Jesus understood and valued it at its full value when he was at the very climax of his popularity.

In this parable of the Sower he analyzed the crowd. The important thing is not the seed nor the sower, but the soil. Good seed, of course, is essential, and good sowing is necessary, but Jesus is not thinking of the sowing or of the sower. He is thinking of the soil, for the same seed falls on different kinds of soil. It is a fourfold soil and in analyzing the soil Jesus interprets the crowd. There are four types of people, Jesus says.

To Think About: The old classic definition of people was fourfold. People were said to be classified according to their temperament as

sanguine, or melancholic, or phlegmatic, or choleric. Look up these words in the dictionary and try to understand them. To what type do you belong?

BY THE WAYSIDE

"Some seed fell by the way side." The wayside means the hard path through the field, and upon that beaten road the seed fell as upon a pavement, and what was meant for the soil went to the birds. There are men and women in the world whose hearts are just as unreceptive as the soil that forms the beaten path, which is hard. There are hearts that are only highways. The roads of the world lead right through the souls of such people; the world's traffic passes through the very holy of holies of their hearts. The wheels of business and commerce have trodden the thoughts and feelings of men and pressed them down hard. Nothing is sacred. There are no deep or proved convictions. Every avenue opens out into the world of pleasure or of business.

The wife of Charles Darwin, writing to him about his religious life, said, "May not the habit of scientific pursuits influence your mind too much?" That is to say, it may be possible to be unreceptive to the good seed of the gospel.

To Think About: In The Epistle to the Hebrews, Esau is spoken of as a "profane person." Look up the word "profane" in the dictionary and try to understand what is meant by calling Esau a "profane person." The suggestion is, of course, that there was nothing sacred to him. There was no holy of holies in his life.

ON STONY GROUND

Some seed fell on stony ground. The people of Palestine knew immediately what Jesus meant by "stony ground." He did not mean soil in which stones were mixed with the earth, but the earth which had a shallow, superficial layer of soil, and underneath hardpan, as we say, or rock. When the seed was sown in this soft, upper surface, the grain, warmed by the first rays of sun in the springtime, immediately began to grow, but as the dry days of summer came and the moisture disappeared there was no root and when the harvest time came, there was no reaping.

There are people just like that, says Jesus. They are superficial. They are Sunday Christians. They are charmed by the gospel, but not converted. During a revival they come to church even on week nights, but when the common days return with ordinary services and common temptations they "wither away," and it is often those who are most warm-hearted in their enthusiasm, who are quick and impulsive, who possess what Jesus calls the hard heart. "They have no root in themselves." Their root is in something else. It is in the stir, the success, the music, but it is not in deep conviction.

To Think About: Read the story of Pliable in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Pliable is an example of seed sown on stony ground. At first he was very enthusiastic, but he fled before difficulties.

AMONG THE THORNS

Some seed fell among thorns. The thorny soil is good soil. The soil that will grow thorns will grow wheat. If you travel over the great prairies in the West you will find the prairie grass on the good soil. On the alkali soil you will find only worthlessness. There is great possibility in the soil that can grow thorns. Great sinners may become great saints. The soil that grows the tallest thorns will also grow the highest wheat.

The trouble with the thorny soil is that it is preoccupied. The thorns will not permit the wheat to grow, and Jesus tells us that the thorns are the cares of the world and the pleasures of life. People are too busy, too much engaged, to allow the good seed of the gospel to grow up into a harvest in their hearts.

To Think About: We give God a divided heart. How often in The Psalms we notice the expression, "My heart is fixed." Only a heart that is unified in its devotion is honest before God. We are to give God the first place in our thoughts and in our hearts.

ON GOOD GROUND

The difference is not in the seed or in the sower but in the soil. The good ground is receptive and like a good heart, receives the seed and reacts to it. "Take heed what ye hear," says Jesus. "Good hearing makes good preaching," and Jesus was satisfied if, out of the crowd, he was able to secure a few good men and sow in their hearts the seed of the gospel.

We must not be too disappointed or disillusioned if the world does not press into the Church, for in analyzing the crowd Jesus shows us that there are many kinds of soil, and that only the good soil brings forth a good harvest.

To Think About: Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher, whose ministry produced such awakening results, said, "A revival of religion is nothing, but the immediate result of uncommon attention on the part of the church and a congregation to the truth of God."

SOIL AND SOULS

We must not press the parable too far. All soils may fail, but soils are not souls. The soil will remain as it is, perhaps, but the souls of men may be changed and converted and transformed. The souls of men are plastic. The souls of men can be redeemed. John Ruskin has told us that out of the filthy soil of the street, composed of clay, soot, sand, and water, the clay may be purified into the radiance of the sapphire, the sand developed into the beauty of the

opal, the soot crystallized into the glory of the diamond, and the water changed into a star of crystal snow. The grace of God can change the hard heart and make it receptive so that it will bring forth a harvest unto the glory of God.

To Think About: Jesus knew men and was not deceived by the enthusiasm of the crowd. Read Robert Browning's "Patriot," to appreciate the fickleness of the crowd.

In the days of Jesus, he seemed to be the only Seed-sower. After him came the twelve disciples who went forth to scatter the good seed of the gospel. Following the Twelve, the Seventy went forth two by two, and so the sowers increased until to-day in every land they are counted by thousands and by millions. In the Presbyterian Church our missionaries who sow the seed in foreign lands carry on the following work:

Eighty-five hospitals and one hundred and thirteen dispensaries, where nearly a half million sufferers last year received physical and spiritual help.

Twenty-seven hundred and nine schools, with one hundred and thirty-one thousand seven hundred and thirty-four pupils, including kindergartens, boys' schools, girls' schools, academies, colleges, theological seminaries, and technical schools.

Six printing presses, where more than one hundred and fifty million pages of the Bible and Christian literature were printed last year.

Fifty-six hundred and twenty-six churches and other preaching places. There are eighty-nine hundred and sixty-five native pastors, teachers, and other Christian workers, many of them supported by the native churches.

Our foreign-mission parish has a population as large as that of the United States.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Make a list of the parables of Jesus.
2. What parables are peculiar to Matthew? to Mark? to Luke?
3. Give an example of a man or a woman represented by the seed that fell by the wayside.
4. Give an example of a man or a woman represented by the stony ground.
5. Give an example of a man or a woman represented by the seed that fell among thorns.
6. What purpose had Jesus in mind in telling this parable?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

THE STILLING OF THE STORM

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"—Mark 4: 41.

TEXT OF LESSON, Mark 4: 35-41.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

35 And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side.

36 And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him.

37 And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling.

38 And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

AUTHORIZED VERSION

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Time—Autumn, A.D. 28. **Place**—Sea of Galilee.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. October 20. Mark 4: 35-41. The Stilling of the Storm.
T. October 21. Mark 6: 45-56. Walking on the Sea.
W. October 22. Deut. 33: 26-29. Safety with God.
T. October 23. Ex. 15: 11-18. The Wonder-Working God.
F. October 24. Isa. 12: 1-6. God Our Salvation.
S. October 25. Psalm 23. Security with God.
S. October 26. Ps. 107: 23-32. God Ruleth the Sea.

A BUSY DAY

The story of this lesson falls upon the same day as that of the lesson of last week. This was one of the busiest days in the life of our Lord. There came to him scribes and Pharisees seeking a sign, and this was the occasion for Jesus to speak plainly to both scribes and Pharisees.

The multitudes thronged him and pressed upon him, so much so that the family of Jesus came to beg him to return home with them.

So great was the crowd pressing upon him that he taught the people from a boat, and the seven parables recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew are part of his discourses to the people.

At the end of the day he was weary and exhausted, and his strength all spent. To gain a little rest, the disciples pushed the boat out into the sea and drew away for the other side. Jesus, exhausted from his long day's work, fell asleep, and was not aware of the storm that had so suddenly arisen and the danger which threatened him and his disciples.

To Think About: Once before in our lessons we came upon the fact that Jesus suffered weariness and fatigue. We read that being weary, he sat by Jacob's well. Perhaps teaching and preaching are the most exhausting of all kinds of work. Why should this be so?

TEACHING BY MIRACLE

In our last lesson we were introduced to Jesus' method of teaching by parable. In this lesson we are brought face to face with the fact that sometimes he taught by miracle. A miracle may be defined as a parable in action. What is a miracle? Sometimes a miracle is defined as something that is done in opposition to the laws of nature. This is not the true way to define a miracle. Dr. William M. Taylor in his book on "The Miracles of Our Saviour" defines a miracle as a "work out of the usual sequence of secondary causes and effects which cannot be accounted for by the ordinary operation of those causes and which is produced by the agency of God."

It is not a violation of the laws of nature or a suspension of those laws but should be thought of as the operation of a higher law. If the mental can supersede the physical so that a child may put to shame the strength of the horse, and if the moral can control the mental, may we not allow the same high distinction to the Almighty? God is not one of the laws of life, he is their Originator. God is not part and parcel of this world, but is over and above all, blessed forever.

To Think About: What does Chesterton mean by these words? "Things that cannot be and that are." A miracle to Jesus was a natural act. Remember who he was.

THE FRIGHTENED DISCIPLES

The Sea of Galilee is noted for its sudden squalls. Storms come up quickly. The Sea of Galilee lies in the hollow of the hills, and the chilly winds from Mount Hermon come down suddenly from the upper valley of the Jordan. In the midst of the sea the storm broke upon the disciples. The boat was filling with water and in their terror and fear the disciples came to Jesus with words of rebuke upon their lips, saying, "Carest thou not that we perish?"

Jesus was quietly sleeping in the stern of the boat, fearless and unafraid. The long day's labor had told upon him, and in utter weariness he had fallen asleep, in such an unlikely place and at such an unlikely time. This is the only place in the Gospels where we read about Jesus sleeping. He was always awake. When others slept he was awake. On the Mount of Transfiguration, his disciples slept but he kept watch, and in the Garden of Gethsemane, while they all slumbered and slept he kept his lonely vigil.

To Think About: We are apt to blame the disciples for their fearfulness and also for the way in which they came to Christ, but the interesting thing about it all is that they came to Jesus. They did the right thing. In their helplessness they turned to him.

THE FEARLESS CHRIST

Jesus was unafraid and asleep. Perhaps he was dreaming that he was back in heaven in his Father's house, walking again in heaven's high halls, dreaming perhaps that the birds were singing and that the dark winter with its Gethsemane and Calvary were over and that heaven's springtime had come again.

Wherever he was he was safe. Underneath him were the everlasting arms. He knew the words of the One Hundred and Twenty-First Psalm about the God who neither slumbers nor sleeps. His first words were words of peace to those who were in terror. Luke tells us that he said, "Where is your faith?" In his presence the storm died down and there was a great calm.

Robert Louis Stevenson in one of his stories tells us that in his boyhood a boat that had been anchored to a rock on which his father was building a lighthouse was caught in a sudden storm that came out of the west. The crew were placed under deck. The storm broke upon the ship and every link of the chain creaked as if about to break. One of the crew as the storm began to abate, crept up above deck and saw the captain lashed to the mast, but saw on his face the light of hope, and fear passed out of his heart. The great Captain, Christ, always speaks peace and stills the fears of the hearts of men.

To Think About: John Bunyan in his "Pilgrim's Progress" has a story about a person whom he calls "Little Faith." When he was attacked he lost his ready money but his jewels were safe because he had left them with his Lord. What does Bunyan mean by this story?

FAITH AND FEAR

Fear is always the opposite of faith. It is not doubt that is opposed to faith. It is fear. Because the disciples had little faith they were afraid. Jesus came to drive out fear, the fear of everything, fear of failure, fear of death, fear of men, fear of evil spirits.

Christianity, like Christ, is fearless. Fear is the most paralyzing

influence in the world, and we need the quickening revival of a militant faith. We need to understand that faith in God can never fail, that no one can pluck us out of our Father's hands. Dr. J. Rendel Harris tells this beautiful story:

"I was staying with some friends in Wilmington, Delaware. On my bed was a coverlet made of old brown linen, spun in the old days. Over it were worked the lines:

'God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness his rest.'

When I came down in the morning they asked me how I had slept, and my answer was, 'How could I have slept other than well with such a text as that on top of me?' The open sea was like the harbor that night. A voice through Mrs. Browning had said, 'Peace, be still.' "

To Think About: Donald Hankey, the Christian soldier who gave his life in the Great War, gave this definition of religion, "Religion is betting one's life that there is a God." What did he mean?

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

When the storm had died down and peace reigned on the silver sea the disciples looked at one another in their amazement and said, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" They did not miss the lesson which Jesus meant to teach them. In this strange way and by this miracle, he taught the people that he held the world in the hollow of his hand and that no harm could come to him or to them.

Faith in God is after all the greatest thing in the world. These disciples had faith in their boat and in their oars and in their strong arms until they found themselves helpless in the grip of the storm. It is an example of misplaced faith. People have plenty of faith, but they are misplacing it. Here is a man who is in poverty because he misplaced his faith and put his hard-earned savings into worthless securities. Here is a man riding across a bridge, and suddenly one of the girders snaps and he is engulfed and thrown into the river.

All this is true of man-made bridges and banks and bonds, but faith that is centered in God cannot fail. "The eternal God is thy dwelling-place." Jesus' constant wonder was that men put their faith in untrustworthy things and forgot about God. "Trust in him [God] at all times, ye people."

To Think About: It is not a great faith but a little faith in a great Saviour which counts. A recent writer says:

"I have read, that, when the first cable of the suspension bridge that now spans the Niagara was about to be laid, a thin thread was

attached to a kite and both sent, on a favoring wind, to the other side of the river. By means of that thread, a heavier string was pulled across, and by it a heavier string still, and then a rope, and then a tow, and then the cable, and the other parts of that mighty bridge that enables the people to pass in safety, from one side to the other, over the roaring cataract beneath. Let but those who doubt or disbelieve fasten the tiny thread of faith that lingers in them still to the spiritual side of life, and gradually it will become stronger and stronger until it will grow into a mighty bridge that will carry them safely, over the seething and hissing abyss of doubts and perplexities, unto the yonder peaceful shore."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Read John Bunyan's story of Little Faith in "Pilgrim's Progress."
2. Look up these passages where Jesus said, "O ye of little faith." Matt. 6: 30; 8: 26; 16: 8; Luke 12: 28.
3. Write out in your own words the definition of a miracle.
4. Write out in your own words a definition of faith.
5. Account for the fact that Jesus slept quietly in the storm.
6. What is the true relation of fear and faith?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

THE PRODIGAL SON

(WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I will arise and go to my father."—Luke 15: 18.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 15: 11-24.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of *thy* substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

AUTHORIZED VERSION

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring the fatted calf, *and* kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:
24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it;* and let us eat, and be merry:
24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Time—January, A.D. 30. Place—Perea.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. October 27. Luke 15: 11-24. The Prodigal Son.
T. October 28. Matt. 18: 7-14. Seeking the Straying One.
W. October 29. John 10: 11-18. The Good Shepherd.
T. October 30. II Chron. 6: 36-39. A Prayer for Restoration.
F. October 31. Acts 17: 22-31. The Offspring of God.
S. November 1. Jer. 31: 31-34. The New Covenant.
S. November 2. Ps. 51: 1-8. A Prayer for Pardon.

THREE GOSPEL PARABLES

The great French critic Renan called the Gospel of Luke the most beautiful book in the world, and this must have been because it contained such a story as this lesson. Nowhere in all literature is there such a story as the story of the Prodigal Son. It fascinates us with its beauty and captures our hearts by its simplicity. It is like beaten gold. Every word and phrase is priceless, and nothing better could be done than to memorize the words of this lesson and lay them up in our hearts.

Call to mind the beautiful expressions which have become almost proverbial: "When he had spent all"; "I will arise and go to my father"; "While he was yet afar off"; "He was lost, and is found." In order to appreciate the setting of the lesson the whole of ch. 15 should be read carefully. It contains three Gospel parables. They have been called "parables of grace." The first is the parable of the Lost Sheep and the Seeking Shepherd. The second is the parable of the Lost Coin and the Successful Search. The third is the parable of the Lost Son and the Seeking Father.

The lesson is studied here out of its chronological order. It should follow and not precede the next three lessons which are to be studied, but is placed here in order that it might be studied on World's Temperance Sunday.

To Think About: This parable has been called "The evangel within the evangel." If Jesus had come to our earth and told us nothing more about God than is told in this parable of the Lost Son and the Seeking Father, it would have changed the world's conception of God. It is the most wonderful picture of God that has ever been painted.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLE

The purpose of this parable, as well as the purpose of the parables preceding it in this chapter, is threefold. In the first place, it

contains a message to the disciples of Jesus concerning the character of God, and his love for all men. In the second place, it contains a message to the multitude that was thronging about him as he journeyed up toward Jerusalem. Remember that Jesus, when he spoke this parable, was within a few weeks of his death, and there was gathered around him a great crowd of publicans, sinners, and outcasts who had seen the possibility of new life in his presence.

The first verse of the chapter gives us the background: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The parable contains a message of hope to this great class of hopeless people who were condemned by the Pharisees and the scribes.

In the third place, it was a message of warning to the Pharisees and scribes themselves. They had condemned Jesus because he kept company with sinners and was kind to them. They held the opinion that holiness should have no fellowship with evil. Jesus, on the other hand, held that holiness and love went hand in hand and that the love of God was seeking, that it was like the love that went forth into the wilderness, and down in the dust of the mud floor for the lost coin, and out into the far country for the lost child. These parables present to us a revelation of the character of God.

To Think About: Compare the definition of God contained in the Shorter Catechism with the picture of God presented by Jesus in the story of the Prodigal Son. The definition in the Shorter Catechism is: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

A PICTURE OF SIN

Jesus began the parable with the story of the home in which this young man, called "the prodigal," had lived as a boy. It consisted of a father and two sons. Jesus was kind to sinners, but he was indignant at sin, and it is very difficult to discover a picture of sin that is more tragic than the picture which is outlined here in this parable. This young man was in deed and in truth a sinner. Notice the characteristics of sin as here described by Jesus:

(1) Sin is selfishness. He said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." He gathered into his arms everything that belonged to him and claimed it as his own to spend as he liked. Sin is always selfish.

(2) Sin is ungrateful. Careless of what became of the home and the devotion of his father, he went off into a far country. Sin cares nothing about the comfort of others. It is always ungrateful.

(3) Sin is wasteful and wild. In the far country he wasted his substance with riotous living. Sin is a spendthrift, and lives an uncontrolled and lawless life.

(4) Sin is loneliness. At the end, his gay companions were gone and he was absolutely alone. He had no friends. We think of Judas going out into the night alone.

(5) Sin is beastliness. He went out into the field to feed swine, which to a Jew was the last limit of degradation, and, on the top of it all, his heart was hungry and his remorse was bitter. This is a picture of sin such as we find scarcely anywhere else in the Bible. It is this situation which makes possible the application of the principles of temperance.

To Think About: The steps of sin lead down to death. Here is the history of sin outlined in The Epistle of James: "But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death."

A PICTURE OF PENITENCE

Having gone to the very limit of sin, the prodigal "came to himself." He experienced what is known as repentance. The word "repentance" in Greek means a "change of mind." He had held wrong views of life, wrong views of his home, wrong ideas about his father, wrong views about God. He changed his mind. We are told definitely what led to this change of mind. It was the memory of his father's love and goodness.

His repentance involved three steps: (1) Reflection. He began to think. He began to consider the path over which he had come. The first step in repentance is to think. We read in the story of Peter that when he "thought thereon," he wept. The reason why repentance is so rare in life is because people are afraid to think seriously about the deep things of life. They pass on from interest to interest and from jest to jest, and never seriously commune with their own hearts. The prodigal had plenty to think about: his present condition, his past errors, the home which he had left, the life which he had lived were all causes for thought.

(2) He began to act. He rose up from his low condition and stood upon his feet. Repentance is more than sentiment. It is more than being sorry. It involves the retracing of all our steps and the undoing of what has been done as far as that is possible.

(3) He began to confess. He went home with words of confession on his lips. He had a speech all prepared. He had done wrong, and he was willing to confess it. That involved courage.

To Think About: Spurgeon, the great London preacher, had a story of a poor, lost girl who found Christ in one of his services. She wrote him, telling him of the great change that had taken place in her life, then said that she was on her way home to her father and mother. Spurgeon said in commenting on the story that the fact that she had gone home was proof of her changed life.

A PICTURE OF FORGIVENESS

The speech that had been prepared was not all spoken. Forgiveness is always beforehand. "But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Forgiveness and repentance are two sides of the sheet. Forgivenesss waits upon repentance. There is no trouble about finding forgiveness in God. He is our Father. "He will abundantly pardon." The problem is not to find forgiveness, but to find penitence, and penitence is only found at the cross of Christ. Christ came to give repentance. Let us keep this in mind.

To Think About: The prodigal was not put upon probation. He was forgiven immediately and completely. Forgiveness does not come by degrees. It is absolute. People who say they can forgive but not forget do not understand the meaning of forgiveness.

THE PICTURE OF UNFORGIVENESS

The parable, however, has a discordant note. Read to the end of the chapter and discover the attitude of the elder brother which, doubtless, represents the unforgiving spirit of the Pharisees. What a contrast it is to the forgiving and loving spirit of the father! The life of the elder son is not subject to criticism, but his attitude toward his father and his brother is. The spirit of God, our heavenly Father, is the spirit of forgiveness, and we are like God when we, too, manifest the same spirit.

To Think About: John G. Paton, the great missionary, tells us that he had a brother who was lost at sea. His mother, however, refused to give up hope and all through her life the door of their Scotch home was kept unlocked lest he might return and find the door barred against his entrance. That mother's heart is a picture of the revelation Jesus gives us of the character of God in this wonderful parable.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What application of this lesson can be made to the subject of temperance?
2. What was Jesus' purpose in telling this parable?
3. What can be learned from this parable concerning the nature of sin?
4. What does Jesus teach us about God here?
5. What is repentance?
6. On what condition is forgiveness secured?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the bread of life."—John 6: 35.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 6: 1-15.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

1 After these things Je'sus went away to the other side of the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea* of Ti-be'ri-as.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

3 And Je'sus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

5 Je'sus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Phil'ip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Phil'ip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?

10 Je'sus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 Je'sus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.

12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.

13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

1 After these things Je'sus went over the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea* of Ti-be'ri-as.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Je'sus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 ¶ When Je'sus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Phil'ip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Phil'ip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Je'sus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Je'sus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they

14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

15 Je'sus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

had seen the miracle that Je'sus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

15 ¶ When Je'sus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Time—April, A.D. 29. **Place**—Bethsaida.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. November 3. John 6: 1-15. The Feeding of the Five Thousand.
T. November 4. Ex. 16: 13-20. The Feeding of the Israelites.
W. November 5. I Kings 17: 1-16. The Feeding of Elijah.
T. November 6. John 6: 27-33. The Bread from Heaven.
F. November 7. John 6: 41-51. Jesus, the Bread of Life.
S. November 8. John 6: 52-63. Jesus Explains His Words.
S. November 9. Ps. 107: 1-9. God, the Great Provider.

A GREAT CRISIS

This lesson marks a distinct crisis in the life of our Lord. It was the beginning of the last year of his public ministry and the time is definitely set, for we are told that the time of the passover had come. The mark of time is very evident, and it is interesting to note that this is the only miracle in the life of Jesus that is recorded by all four evangelists. See Matt. 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 31-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-15.

If the question is asked why this miracle should be so important, the answer is at hand. Jesus had come to the end of his year of popularity, and the people were crowding about him and were filled with enthusiasm and expectation. We read that after the miracle was over the people crowded about him and were determined to make him a king. They were ready to use force, and to thrust temporal leadership upon him.

This, however, was not the path which Jesus was to tread, and so he escaped from the multitude and went into retirement. From this time forward his ministry was devoted in large measure to the teaching and training of his disciples.

To Think About: Is there any connection between the passover feast that was being celebrated at Jerusalem and the feeding of the five thousand in the wilderness? What idea is at the heart of both these significant events?

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

The lesson text begins with the words "after these things." The phrase is very indefinite, and yet we are able from the other Gospels to come to a conclusion as to what is meant. In the first place, the twelve disciples had returned from their evangelistic mission. They had been commissioned by Jesus and had gone forth preaching and

healing and had returned to him with their enthusiastic, unanimous report.

In Mark 6: 30 we have their report: "The apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught." It was after their report that Jesus took them away into the desert place.

In the second place, John the Baptist had been beheaded. He had been in prison for over a year, and had suffered martyrdom just before the event of this lesson. The story is recorded in the Gospels, and Mark tells us that it took place immediately before the return of the Twelve. Jesus and his disciples were profoundly moved, and perhaps wondered if a similar fate might not be meted out to them.

To avoid trouble with Herod and to escape from all political entanglements, Jesus withdrew from his public ministry and sought, on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, toward the north, a place of rest and retirement where he and his disciples might have leisure to think and to pray.

To Think About: It is good oftentimes to withdraw from threatened trouble. Paul escaped from Damascus and went out into the desert. Elijah escaped from Jezebel and fled into the wilderness. Luther went into retirement and came forth ready for his great work. Sometimes God hides away his workers to prepare them for greater service.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE

The Gospels are unanimous in stating that Jesus was overwhelmed with the crowd of people that kept coming and going. Mark tells us that there was no place for them to rest and that there was no time for them even to eat. The door of an Eastern house is always open to friends who wish to come and go, and no opportunity was left for Jesus and his followers to rest. If the question is asked, "Why should there have been such a crowd surging in and out of the house?" two reasons may be given.

In the first place, Jesus had had a long ministry of healing and had performed many miracles. People had pressed upon him with all sorts of complaints and sicknesses, and he had healed them. Then, too, it was the time of the passover and multitudes of people from all parts of the country were going up to Jerusalem and were anxious to see Jesus, for his fame had gone out through all the land. So it came about that the disciples, in order to obtain rest and at the command of Jesus, took a boat and started across the lake toward Bethsaida on the northern part of the Sea of Galilee.

The place they chose was not desert, for there was grass there. The people, noticing Jesus and his disciples depart, followed him on foot around the head of the lake, and were ready to meet him as he landed on the other side. Matthew tells us that he began again his ministry of healing. He tells us that Jesus had compassion on

them, and healed their sick and that he also taught them and ministered to them until evening had come.

To Think About: Jesus always allowed himself to be interrupted. He never closed the door nor permitted a call to go unanswered. His meat and his drink were to do the will of God.

THE MASTER AND THE FEAST

As the evening drew on, the disciples were in a panic owing to the great multitude of people that lingered on the other side of the lake. The night was drawing on and there was no food. They came to Jesus saying, "Send them away." Jesus, however, replied, "They have no need to go away." There may have been the suggestion of a smile on the face of Jesus as he spoke these words to his disciples, and our lesson tells us that he looked over the multitude and said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"

John remarks that Jesus said this to prove Philip because he himself knew what he meant to do. If you gather together all the suggestions in the four Gospels regarding the conversation between Jesus and his disciples, it would perhaps be as follows:

Jesus (speaking to Philip, whose home was at Bethsaida, and who therefore was acquainted with the region and the people). "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" (John.)

Philip. "Two hundred shillings' worth [$34 worth] of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." (John.)

The Apostles. "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get provisions." (Luke.)

Jesus. "Give ye them to eat." (Luke.)

The Apostles. "Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?" (Mark.)

Jesus. "How many loaves have ye? go and see." (Mark.)

To Think About: Jesus was the world's greatest Teacher. It is interesting in this lesson to see how he led his disciples on little by little and revealed to them his own mind and will in regard to the miracle. He might have sent down manna from heaven, but he chose rather to minister to the people in a more indirect way.

THE MASTER'S HELPERS

Jesus in this miracle made use of other people. He might have immediately supplied the needs of the people with bread, but this was not the Master's way. There was no more of the miraculous than was necessary, and he called to his help others who were able to minister to the people with him. He made use of Philip. Philip belonged to Bethsaida and understood the country and the neighborhood. He made use of Andrew, and Andrew had great tact in deal-

ing with personal problems. He made use also of the little lad who enters into the story in a very interesting way. He was there in the multitude with his five barley loaves and two small fishes, and that fact tells us a good deal about him. The barley loaves suggest that he belonged to the humble and poorer class of people. The fact that he was present in the multitude that wanted to see Jesus manifests a thoughtful spirit on his part and his interest in the deeper things of life.

His willingness to surrender the lunch on which he depended shows that he was generous and he became through his generosity immortal. Jesus makes use of little things and little people and multiplies the service and the property given to him in love for the welfare of others.

To Think About: God is able to do a great deal with a very little. Five barley loaves and two small fishes fed a multitude. A little money grows into a great philanthropy. A cup of cold water is remembered in eternity.

THE MIRACLE

It was a great multitude that sat down upon the grass out by the seashore. We are told that there were five thousand men besides women and children. Jesus ordered them to sit down on the grass in companies. It was all orderly and beautiful. It was like a great sacramental occasion.

We can see the little lad looking up into the face of Jesus as he held in his hand the five small loaves and the two little fishes which he had carried about with him during the day. It was all so simple and beautiful. Jesus took the loaves in his own hand, gave thanks to God, and then distributed the food to the disciples, and the disciples distributed to the multitude. It multiplied in his hands until there was enough for all. Not only were all satisfied, but there was much left.

Jesus ordered his disciples to gather up all the broken pieces that remained over and when everything was gathered carefully together, twelve baskets were filled. There was more left over than had been given to him at the beginning. It is a parable of how the gift is multiplied by giving and sharing. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want."

To Think About: Long ago, when the Massachusetts Legislature was passing an act of incorporation for a missionary society, one of the members suggested that it looked as if they were sanctioning the exporting of religion when in fact they had none to spare. Another member replied that religion was a commodity of which the more we export, the more we have left.

THE RESULT OF THE MIRACLE

John calls this miracle a "sign." He calls all the miracles of Jesus "signs." Of what was this miracle a sign? The people took it as a sign that Jesus was in deed and in truth the Prophet for whom they were looking, the One who would speak for God and supply the deepest needs of their lives.

Jesus, however, in the discussion which follows this lesson, used the miracle as a sign that God is the Giver of the true bread of life, which satisfies the hungry souls of men. Read the entire chapter, and then you will understand the deeper meaning of the miracle. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

To Think About: Jesus had to escape from the people because they sought to make him a king. They were willing to make Jesus a king because he was able to supply them with bread. His mission, however, in the world, was not to supply the bread that perisheth, but to give them the bread which does not perish. If a man eat of this bread, he will never hunger.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Point out the marks of difference between the story of the miracle as given in the four Gospels.
2. What part do Philip and Andrew play in the story of the miracle?
3. Why are we interested in the little lad who gave his lunch to Jesus?
4. Why did Jesus make so much use of his disciples in the performing of the miracle?
5. What did Jesus mean to teach by the miracle?
6. What was the effect of the miracle upon the people?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

PETER'S CONFESSION

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—Matt. 16: 16.

TEXT OF LESSON, Matt. 16: 13-20.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

13 Now when Je'sus came into the parts of Cæs-a-re'a Phi-lip'pi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

14 And they said, Some *say* John the Bap'tist; some, E-li'jah; and others, Jer-e-mi'ah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

16 And Si'mon Pe'ter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'mon Bar-Jo'nah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Pe'ter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Ha'des shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

13 ¶ When Je'sus came into the coasts of Cæs-a-re'a Phi-lip'pi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Bap'tist: some, E-li'as; and others, Jer-e-mi'as, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Si'mon Pe'ter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'mon Bar-jo'na: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Pe'ter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Je'sus the Christ.

Time—Autumn, A.D. 29. Place—Near Cæsarea Philippi.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. November 10. Matt. 16: 13-20. Peter's Confession.
T. November 11. Matt. 16: 21-28. Peter's Protest.
W. November 12. Matt. 17: 1-9. Peter's Petition.
T. November 13. John 6: 60-71. Peter's Loyalty.
F. November 14. John 21: 15-25. Peter's Love.
S. November 15. II Peter 1: 1-10. Precious Promises.
S. November 16. Psalm 84. Blessings of the Sanctuary.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

A few months intervene between our last lesson and the lesson of to-day. The feeding of the five thousand took place some time in April and the events of this lesson occurred in the autumn. The

events which occurred between the lessons may be discovered in the Gospels.

After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus dismissed his disciples and the multitude and retired into the hills to spend the night in prayer. It was in the night that he came to his disciples walking upon the water. Then followed the discourse on the bread of life recorded in the sixth chapter of John and the controversy with the Pharisees about eating with unwashed hands.

As was pointed out in the last lesson, Jesus avoided publicity and we read that he left Galilee and went away up toward the north to the region of Tyre where he healed the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman. He returned from that long journey to the eastern side of the lake where he performed miracles of healing and fed the four thousand. Gradually the controversy with the Pharisees became more intense, and in order to avoid conflict and political disturbance and for still deeper reasons Jesus withdrew into the country into the region of Cæsarea Philippi where he was beyond the jurisdiction of Herod and where he could in retirement find conditions more favorable for the instruction of his disciples.

To Think About: We begin in this lesson the study of the last year of our Lord's life. It is called the "Year of Opposition." The clouds began to gather, and Jesus and his disciples were drawn closer together in the intimacy of what may be called their training school.

A MOMENTOUS QUESTION

The greatest question Jesus ever asked was put to his disciples in the quiet seclusion of the mountains around Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus had been getting ready to ask this question for more than a year. For a year he had been opening his heart to his disciples. The time had now come to make a full disclosure of himself. He deliberately staged the setting for the asking of this central question, and the memories of the occasion were never effaced. Many of you can summon up in memory the place where an important question was asked and answered. Jesus deliberately chose the setting, and created the atmosphere for this question. He left Galilee, and with his disciples journeyed to the far boundary of his native land to the very border of heathenism, beyond the hills of the north, and there, amid the solitudes of nature, away from the busy, thronging life of the highway, in the quiet of the mountains, and after prayer had quickened spiritual insight, Jesus asked the question that had long been in his heart, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"

To Think About: They had often discussed the same question among themselves, but now that Jesus asked it they were surprised and startled, and looked at one another with concern upon their countenances. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" It was

a strange question. From the lips of any other man it would betoken arrogance and self-conceit. Men do not ask other men about themselves.

THE FIRST ANSWER

After the silence and surprise, several answers were given. Perhaps each disciple had an answer ready. Probably it was Andrew who responded that he had heard some one say that Jesus was John the Baptist. That was strange. John had been dead for some months, and dead men who have lost their heads do not come to life.

Then James perhaps replied that he had heard some of the people say that Jesus was Elijah. This, too, was strange. Elijah had been in heaven for centuries. There was none to recognize him should he return in the flesh. Another said that the people spoke of Jesus as Jeremiah, the prophet who had stood out alone against a godless world. In turn, each of the disciples brought to him the gossip of the market and the street, and their findings were to the effect that the people believed that Jesus was one of the prophets, if not John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, then one of the prophets, perhaps Amos, with his cry for justice, or Hosea, proclaiming the love of God, which "is broader than the measure of man's mind."

To Think About: The common impression Jesus made upon the people of his day was like the impression made by John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Notice that these three represented the ideals of courage and heroism. The people of his day thought of Jesus in terms of the heroic.

THE SENSE OF MYSTERY

"John . . . Elijah; . . . Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." A prophet is a man who speaks to God. A prophet is not a man among men, but a man of God. The prophets were men who were lonely in their moral grandeur. Like mountain peaks they stood alone with their heads in the clouds. They were lonely in their moral heroism and in the solitude of their communion with God.

The people of his day knew that Jesus belonged to the order of the prophets. Men saw in Jesus something more than that which they saw in ordinary men. There was something more than human about him. He was like one of the old prophets who belonged to immortality. Moses had seen God face to face. Elisha had seen the heavens full of invisible cavalry. Isaiah had heard the voice of God in the inner Temple, and the people knew that Jesus had something about him which reminded them of the prophets who knew God. There was something about him that was unique, extraordinary, and mysterious.

To Think About: Memorize and interpret the answer in the Shorter Catechism to the question, "How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?"

Answer: "Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation."

THE SECOND ANSWER

The disciples had given Jesus their opinion as to what the people thought of him, but Jesus was not satisfied with that answer. It was the answer of the crowd. Jesus wanted their own answer, and so he asked a second and more personal question. "Who say ye that I am?"

There was a moment's pause; then Peter, answering for himself and for his companions, said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was an amazing answer. It was the first Christian confession, and Jesus was satisfied, and upon that first Christian confession the Church of Christ was founded.

Which of these two answers is true? One must be right. There can be no third answer. Let us look at them. The first answer presents Jesus to us as one of the prophets, one of the great men of history, standing apart from the common order of men, but still a man. This is a reasonable position to hold. It has been held since the time of Christ down to the present by many good and honest people who find it impossible to go further. It has been crystallized into a creed. It was first of all called "Arianism," and later "Socinianism," and in our day "Unitarianism." It classifies Jesus as the highest, holiest manhood, and places him, if not alone, in a class by himself, then among the six or sixteen or sixty greatest men of history.

The second answer presents Jesus as the one and only Son of God. In order to oppose the teaching that he was only man, the creeds in legal fashion use words of an exclusive nature, and make this distinction plain. He is very God of very God; Light of lights; Life of life; begotten, not created. There is, of course, an inexplicable mystery in these words, but the thought is simple and understandable. It is the view that is held by Christians everywhere, Protestant and Roman Catholic, and is common to all branches of the Christian Church.

To Think About: In the closing paragraphs of his book "Now It Can Be Told," Sir Philip Gibbs says, "We are as desperately in need of the Spirit of Christ as at any time in the history of mankind." What does he mean?

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Peter's answer satisfied Jesus. Peter's confession was like a flash of inspiration, and Jesus expressed his approval in words of gratitude and delight, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is

in heaven." Jesus accepted the confession of Peter, and made it central in the organization of the Christian Church.

The Roman Catholic Church uses these words in order to give Peter himself a place of primacy in the history of the Church. The Protestant Church interprets the words as meaning either that it was upon the confession of Peter that Christ was the Son of the living God, that the Church is founded or that it is founded upon Peter, the Confessor, the first Christian man in all history who openly avowed and acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

The Christian Church is made up of men and women who openly confess Christ as their Lord and among these confessed Christians the first to make the confession was Peter. The Church, therefore, was founded upon the experience of Peter, and those like him who have discovered in Jesus Christ their Saviour and their Lord. The word "Peter" is derived from the word which means "rock," and the rock upon which the Church is built is not Peter, but Christ himself, whom Peter confessed to be the Son of the living God.

To Think About: Jesus told his disciples to keep silence in regard to the discovery which Peter had announced. This, of course, was a command occasioned by the necessities of the time in which they lived. No such command comes to us. On the other hand we are commanded to proclaim our faith to all the world.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What change in the methods and ministry of Jesus is noted in this lesson?
2. Why did Jesus take his disciples out of Galilee when he asked them the question, "Who say ye that I am"?
3. Point out the difference in the two questions which Jesus asked.
4. What is the difference between the answers given by the people in general and the answer given by Peter to Jesus' questions?
5. Who is Jesus Christ?
6. Explain the words: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him."—Luke 9: 35.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 9: 28-36.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

28 And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Pe'ter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *became* white *and* dazzling.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Mo'ses and E-li'jah;

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Je-ru'sa-lem.

32 Now Pe'ter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Pe'ter said unto Je'sus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mo'ses, and one for E-li'jah: not knowing what he said.

34 And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him.

36 And when the voice came, Je'sus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Pe'ter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Mo'ses and E-li'as:

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Je-ru'sa-lem.

32 But Pe'ter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Pe'ter said unto Je'sus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mo'ses, and one for E-li'as: not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Je'sus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Time—Autumn, A.D. 29. **Place**—Mount Hermon.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M.	November 17.	Luke 9: 28-36. The Transfiguration.
T.	November 18.	Ex. 34: 29-35. Moses Before God.
W.	November 19.	II Kings 2: 1-11. The Translation of Elijah.
T.	November 20.	Matt. 3: 13-17. The Heavenly Approval.
F.	November 21.	II Peter 1: 16-21. The Voice from Heaven.
S.	November 22.	Rev. 1: 10-18. The Glorified Christ.
S.	November 23.	Ps. 86: 1-7. Confidence in God.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

This is one of the most interesting and wonderful passages in the life of Christ. The story of the transfiguration follows almost immediately after the events of the lesson of last week. Immediately after Peter's great confession, in which he made known the conviction of his heart that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus began to teach his disciples about the fact of his death and resurrection. He began to teach them that he must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed and the third day rise again.

We are told that Peter resented this teaching, and that he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." Peter could not understand how such a thing could happen, and Jesus, turning to Peter, said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."

Peter could not understand the cross. Jesus, however, knew its certainty, and was within a few months of Calvary, and so it was necessary for him to prepare his disciples for what was to take place. It was because of this tragic prophecy that Jesus took the three disciples up into the mountain near Cæsarea Philippi and there was transfigured before them.

The transfiguration probably took place on Mount Hermon, a snow-topped mountain rising about nine thousand feet above the Mediterranean, at the foot of which lay Cæsarea Philippi.

To Think About: Mount Hermon is one of the sacred mountains of the Holy Land. Name and locate other sacred mountains. Why are they called sacred? Are there places known to you alone, that have a sacredness about them for you?

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

We are told definitely that Jesus took James and John and Peter up into the mountain to pray. It was his habit not only to pray but to pray in the silence and secrecy of the night. Before many of the great events of his life, we are told that he was engaged in prayer. After the feeding of the five thousand, he went apart into the night to pray. Before he chose the twelve disciples he spent the whole night in prayer. Before his crucifixion he spent the night in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear . . . became . . . the author of eternal salvation."

This time Jesus was not alone in his praying. The three disciples accompanied him. We are not able to answer the question why he chose these three. Probably they had advanced further along

in the understanding of Jesus. Three times he took these same three men with him; when he raised the daughter of Jaïrus, and when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and in this lesson, where they beheld him transfigured before their very eyes. Probably Jesus wished to prepare them and through them to prepare the disciples for a better understanding of himself and at the same time he craved their company and the fellowship of their presence.

To Think About: A friend once asked William Blake, the poet, what he did when life became tame and vision became dim. Turning to his wife, the poet said, "What do we do?" and she replied, "We kneel down and pray." Prayer is more than asking God for things. It is holding fellowship and communion with God, who is the Father of our spirits.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

We are told that as he was praying "the fashion of his countenance was altered." Matthew tells us that "he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Mark tells us that "his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them," and Luke in this lesson expresses the same surprise in the words, "the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." The divine glory that belonged to the inner life of Jesus shone through, and his countenance became radiant.

In describing the person of Christ the writer of The Epistle to the Hebrews says he was the "effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his substance." It is a picture of dazzling brightness in which the person of Jesus is transfigured and transformed, and the divine glory is revealed in him. The disciples for the first time saw him revealed in his own glorious apparel and years later, in writing about it, Peter said: "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount."

To Think About: The transfiguration of Jesus reveals the glory that awaits all believers in him. There are many expressions in the Bible which go to show how marvelous this change will be. "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

The story of the transfiguration reveals the fact that the transfiguration was the result of the fellowship of Jesus with the Father. The transfiguration took place during prayer. Nevertheless, behind this mysterious transformation of our Lord there was a divine and definite purpose. Moses and Elijah, who represented the Old Testament dispensation, Moses speaking for the Law, and Elijah for the Prophets, appeared and talked with Jesus, and their conversation concerned his death, which was shortly to take place at Jerusalem.

The word used is "decease" or "departure." Their conversation had to do with the way in which Jesus was to make his departure from the world. You will remember that in Luke 9: 21-27, preceding this lesson, Jesus had talked to the disciples about his suffering and death. The cross was looming up, and Jesus saw clearly that the end was near at hand.

The purpose of the transfiguration, therefore, was not only to prepare Jesus himself for his great atoning work, but was to bring the disciples into fellowship with that mysterious sacrificial offering which Jesus would make of himself on Calvary.

To Think About: God fits his people for what he has prepared for them. He makes ready our hearts for what is to come. If we think back upon life we will discover that God has prepared us for most of the experiences which come to us.

THE THREE DISCIPLES

The transfiguration took place at night, and doubtless this accounts for the fact that the three disciples were heavy with sleep. The translation in the Authorized Version would lead us to believe that the disciples had been asleep and had awakened from their sleep in the midst of the glorious transfiguration of their Lord. The Revised Version in a way corrects this impression. They had not slept, but were, as we say, sleepy, and the revelation of glory fully awakened them and made them aware of the marvelous happenings of that memorable night.

Peter was, as usual, impulsive and enthusiastic, and expressed his mind freely to Jesus, saying, "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." The memory of that great night never faded from Peter's mind, and later he told about it. See II Peter 1: 17, 18. John, too, in the first chapter of his Gospel tells us that "we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."

Peter wanted to abide on the Mount of Transfiguration and to enjoy the glory and radiance of the transfigured Christ. Luke, however tells us that Peter talked without knowing what he said. The transfiguration was not an everyday occurrence, but was meant to be the inspiration for everyday service. Down in the valley sin and

suffering were calling, and it is not the purpose of God that his disciples should withdraw from places where there is human need.

To Think About: Compare Peter's desire to abide on the mountain with this verse from Washington Gladden's hymn:

O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

JESUS ALONE

While Peter was speaking and trying to say something worth while, suddenly a cloud overshadowed them, and fear entered the hearts of the disciples. Out of the cloud came a voice which said, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him." It was the voice that had spoken to Jesus at his baptism, and it is the same voice that spoke to him again at the close of his ministry. No wonder the disciples were afraid. Matthew tells us that Jesus came to them and touched them, saying, "Arise, and be not afraid," and that when they opened their eyes they saw no one save Jesus only. Elijah and Moses had gone, and the cloud had disappeared, and they were in the presence of their familiar Friend.

To Think About: Jesus is central, and when he is put in his right place, everything else is unified around him. Peter and James and John, Moses and Elijah, the past and the present, the old and the new, the Law and the Prophets, all fall into place when Christ is crowned Lord of all.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. On what other occasions did Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him?
2. Locate Mount Hermon on the map. What sacred mountains are mentioned in the New Testament?
3. What was the relation of the prayer life of Jesus to the transfiguration scene?
4. Point out the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah.
5. What was the true purpose of the transfiguration revelation?
6. What transient and what permanent effect did the transfiguration scene have upon the disciples?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words, "*before me*," in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."—Luke 10: 27.

TEXT OF LESSON, Luke 10: 25-37

American Standard Version

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Je'sus, And who is my neighbor?

30 Je'sus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Je-ru'sa-lem to Jer'i-cho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Le'vite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Sa-mar'i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,

34 And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

Authorized Version

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Je'sus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Je'sus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Je-ru'sa-lem to Jer'i-cho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Le'vite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Sa-mar'i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Je'sus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Je'sus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Time—November, A.D. 29. Place—Perea.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. November 24.	Luke 10: 25-37.	The Good Samaritan.
T. November 25.	I Sam. 19: 1-8.	David and Jonathan.
W. November 26.	I Cor., ch. 13.	Love.
T. November 27.	Matt. 18: 15-22.	Jesus Teaches About Forgiveness.
F. November 28.	Matt. 10: 40-42.	"A Cup of Cold Water."
S. November 29.	Matt. 5: 43-48.	The Master's Command.
S. November 30.	I John 4: 7-21.	Brotherly Love.

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

Coming down from the transfiguration mountain, Jesus and his disciples found the other disciples endeavoring to heal the demoniac boy whom the father had brought to them. The boy was an epileptic, and the disciples had failed to cast out the evil spirit and to cure the lad. As soon as Jesus appeared, the father came forward, saying, "Teacher, I beseech thee to look upon my son; for he is mine only child."

He told Jesus all about the sorrow and trouble which he had carried through the years, and then of the disciples' failure. Jesus first of all gave expression to the faithlessness of his disciples, and then spoke words of healing and comfort both to the lad and to his father. They were astonished, we are told, " at the majesty of God."

Immediately afterwards Jesus again foretold his coming death and resurrection, and later answered the disciples' question, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" It was then that Jesus put a little child in the midst of them, and talked to them about humility and forgiveness.

The events of John, chs. 7, 8, should also be studied in connection with this period of our Lord's life. Luke tells us, in the early part of the tenth chapter, of the sending forth of the Seventy and the instructions given to them, and then follows the story of our lesson in which Jesus answers the question of a rather critical lawyer who tried to put him to the test.

To Think About: The story of the Good Samaritan is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. Luke alone gives us many of the finest of Jesus' parables. You will remember that it is Luke only who gives us the story of the Prodigal Son. Make a selection of the parables peculiar to Luke.

THE LAWYER'S QUESTION

Jesus was suddenly confronted by a rather confident lawyer who asked him a test question. "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit

cternal life?" We must understand that this so-called lawyer was not a lawyer in our sense, but was a student of the law of Moses. The only law of the Jewish people was the law of the Bible, but it had been explained and interpreted so that many additional laws and regulations had become effective. This lawyer was a student, therefore, of both the Scriptures and of what we would call tradition. He was an expert in deciding questions relating to conduct and religion.

He came forward to test Jesus. The word usually has a bad sense. He came with the intention of trapping Jesus with a catch question. It was a frequently discussed question and still is. It appears in many forms. Nicodemus asked a similar question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The rich young ruler asked the same question, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Philippian jailer asked the same question in another form, "What must I do to be saved?" It is a question we still ask: "What after all is the *summum bonum?*" "What must I do to enter into peace?" "What must I do to enter into life?" "What must I do to be saved?"

To Think About: How was this man answered? What would you gather, from the way in which Jesus replied to him, as to what Jesus thought about him? Did Jesus take him seriously?

OUR LORD'S ANSWER

Jesus answered the lawyer's question by asking him another question. He took the man at his word; he did not reply to him in an offhand way as it were, but made the man answer his own question. This lawyer was a student of the law. He himself ought to have known, and so Jesus led him back to the law itself. Jesus refused to be trapped by any theological or traditional discussion. He went back to the original source, and sought an answer from what would be undisputed authority.

Lloyd George in writing about the Treaty of Versailles says that half the people that talk about it and discuss it and object to it have never read it. He advises all those who discuss it and who feel that it is to be criticized to read it first of all and master its contents. This surely is fair. There is always much discussion which would be silenced if we were to go back to the real authority.

All theological discussion should go back to the Bible. Jesus took this lawyer back to the law of Moses and bade him answer his question for himself out of that law. The lawyer was brought face to face with this admission and gave a simple and perfect answer. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." This answer was perfectly satisfactory to Jesus, for love, as Jesus himself had announced, was the fulfilling of all law.

To Think About: It has been pointed out that the words "love" and "life" are vitally connected. "Love" is the perfect form of the verb to "live." To enter into life, according to the religion of Jesus is to love.

THE PERFECT LAW

Later in his ministry Jesus was asked a question by the Pharisees, who had combined with the Sadducees to silence him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" He immediately answered the question: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets."

This was the Old Testament summary of the moral law, and it was satisfactory to Jesus. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians proclaimed the supremacy of love. All through the New Testament, love is the supreme and only authority. Jesus combined two texts, Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18, and said that the supreme and undivided love of God was the first commandment. He shifted the emphasis from conduct to character, and demanded that the love which we give to God should be undivided and whole-hearted.

The second commandment followed from the first, for we must love what God loves, and the children of men are the children of God. Social service to men flows from personal service to God. Morality is a fruit of true religion, and brotherhood becomes part of our creed because we acknowledge the fatherhood of God. All other duties flow from this one supreme desire to love God and to love our fellow men. "All our forms of worship, creeds, and the like, are of worth in so far as they are outcomes of love to God, or aid us in loving him and our neighbors. Without love, they are as 'sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.'"

To Think About: A recent book asks the question, "What new thing did Jesus bring?" The book itself answers the question by saying that the one new thing that Jesus brought into the world was himself. The law which Jesus quoted was old, but he gave it a new and deeper interpretation because of his own life and death.

THE SECOND QUESTION

The lawyer was abundantly and completely answered. He did not like to be silenced, and so he asked a second question, "Who is my neighbor?" The Jews had very narrow ideas of neighborhood. Beyond the region of Judaism only barbarians lived. They had a very narrow circle of neighbors. Their neighborhood was confined within the limits of the children of Abraham. Jesus lifted their horizon and defined neighborhood in terms of human need.

He did not answer the question, however, by a definition. He answered it by telling a parable. The parable is familiar and easily understood. "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho." The words are very graphic, for the path is really down, the descent being thirty-two hundred and twenty-five feet in twenty-one miles. It was also a very dangerous road, running between mountains and hills in which thieves and robbers had their hiding places. The road has always been dangerous, and this man, going down perhaps to his home, fell among thieves who robbed him and beat him, and left him by the roadside half dead.

A certain priest passed down to Jericho. We are told that there were at this time some twelve thousand priests and Levites who resided at Jericho. The priest, however, had excuses and reasons of his own, and instead of helping the wounded man "he passed by on the other side."

Then came a Levite who might be described as a priest's helper, performing the humble service about the Temple. A Levite belonged to the tribe of Levi, which was set aside for sacred service. A priest belonged to the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi. The Levite saw the man, but "passed by on the other side."

Then came the Samaritan, belonging to a half-heathen, mixed race, hated by the Jews, and with whom the Jews had no dealings. Nothing could be expected from him, and yet this stranger, this foreigner, had compassion on the wounded man, ministering to him in his need. He took him on his beast to an inn, gave him personal attention, paid for his care, and promised further help and assistance. Having told this simple but thrilling story Jesus turned to the lawyer and said: "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The answer was inevitable. The Samaritan had been the real neighbor.

To Think About: A neighbor may be defined as a person who needs our help. We can define a neighbor as a person who is near us, of our own nation often or our own people; Indians are neighbors; foreigners are neighbors; the negro is a neighbor; the prisoners and the poor are neighbors. Jesus widened the circle to take in all human need, and made the world every man's neighborhood.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The parable rightly takes its name from the kind-hearted Samaritan who ministered to the wounded man in his need. It might have been called by other names. It might have been entitled "The Cruel-Hearted Priest"; "The Selfish Levite." There are many things about the Samaritan which are of interest. He was kind-hearted. He was sympathetic. He was unselfish. He gave of his time, his wealth, his personal service, to a man who had no other claims upon him than his great need. Many lessons stand out as we think about this

foreigner who revealed the true spirit of the law of which Jesus had spoken. Mere religious profession may be but a cloak for hypocrisy, as it was with the priest and the Levite. Men who belong to different nations and to different religious beliefs are still our neighbors and our brothers. A great scholar, Max Müller, said, "It was Christianity that struck the word 'barbarian' from the dictionary of mankind and replaced it with the word 'brother.'"

The judgment scene depicted in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew teaches this same lesson, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." We think of Jesus as the Good Samaritan himself. No sacrifice was too great for him to make in order that he might minister to humanity in its needs. He gave it service, everything. He kept nothing back. He loved us, and gave himself for us. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

To Think About: The application of the lesson is in five words: "Go, and do thou likewise." Alexander Mackay's diary has this entry: "May 4, 1874. This day last year Livingstone died, a Scotchman and a Christian, loving God and his neighbor in the heart of Africa. 'Go, and do thou likewise.'"

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Give in your own words a character sketch of the lawyer who asked Jesus his test question.
2. Draw a word picture of the priest who "passed by on the other side."
3. What quality attracts you in the conduct and character of the Samaritan?
4. What applications in modern life can be made from this parable?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

THE MAN BORN BLIND

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."—John 9: 25.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 9: 13-17, 26-38.
For entire lesson, see John, ch. 9.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

13 They bring to the Phar'i-sees him that aforetime was blind.

14 Now it was the sabbath on the day when Je'sus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Again therefore the Phar'i-sees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see.

16 Some therefore of the Phar'i-sees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

17 They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

* * * * *

26 They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?

28 And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Mo'ses.

29 We know that God hath spoken unto Mo'ses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and *yet* he opened mine eyes.

31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind.

33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

13 ¶ They brought to the Phar'i-sees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath day when Je'sus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Phar'i-sees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Phar'i-sees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

* * * * *

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Mo'ses' disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Mo'ses: *as for* this *fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Je'sus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

37 Je'sus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Je'sus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Je'sus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Time—October 11-18, A.D. 29. **Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M.	December 1.	John 9: 1-12.	Jesus Heals a Blind Man.
T.	December 2.	John 9: 24-34.	The Attitude of the Pharisees.
W.	December 3.	John 9: 35-41.	The Attitude of Jesus.
T.	December 4.	Matt. 5: 10-16.	Shining Christians.
F.	December 5.	Ps. 119: 17-24.	A Prayer for Light.
S.	December 6.	John 8: 12-20.	"The Light of the World."
S.	December 7.	Rev. 19: 1-8.	The Marriage of the Lamb.

"THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

It is necessary to read the whole chapter from which the verses of our lesson are taken in order to understand the lesson which Jesus wished to teach. There is no question about this. The healing of the blind man gave Jesus an opportunity to proclaim the gospel. He is "the light of the world." "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

There are seven miracles recorded in the Gospels in which blind men receive their sight. Jesus cured two blind men at Capernaum, Matt. 9: 27-31; two blind men were healed at Jericho, Matt. 20: 30-34; a blind man was healed at Bethsaida, Mark 8: 22-26; one blind man was healed at Capernaum, Matt. 12: 22, 23; and the healing of this blind man took place at Jerusalem.

There is a difference between the healing in this lesson and that of the healings recorded in the other Gospels. In this case the man healed was born blind, and that created additional wonder and amazement on the part of the people. He said, "Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind." Jesus used the miracle to proclaim his message regarding the light of God which illumines the souls of men. Jesus not only called himself, "the light of the world" but again and again is referred to in the Gospel as the Bringer and Bearer of light.

The prophets prophesied that the Messiah would bring light to the people that were in darkness. In Isaiah we read, "And in that day

shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness." "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." John himself, in the opening verses of his Gospel proclaims that Jesus "was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world."

To Think About: Blindness was and still is very common in the East. We are told that while there is one blind man in two thousand in America, one in every one thousand in Europe, one in every four hundred in China, there is one in every hundred in Egypt and the Near East. Blindness is caused there by excessive light, by the fine dust that fills the air, and by sudden climatic changes.

THE DISCIPLES AND THE BLIND MAN

The blind man sitting at the gate was familiar to all those who passed by. To the people he was an object of compassion and pity. He had grown up until he was of age, and all his life he had been a beggar, depending upon the support of his parents and the charity of the passers-by.

We do not know anything about his home, and his parents took a rather indifferent attitude toward him and did not wish to be entangled in the religious discussion which arose about his healing. The disciples on the other hand were interested in him merely as a problem; a theological problem at that. They asked Jesus a theological question about him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" "What did he do or what did his parents do that he should suffer?"

It was a common opinion, in those days, and still is, that all suffering is the result of sin. This problem is met with in The Book of Job and in The Psalms. While it is true that suffering always follows sin, yet it is not true that suffering is the result of immediate sin, or of sin on the part of those who suffer, and so Jesus brushed aside their question with a plain statement of fact. "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

To believe that the man was blind because of his sin or his parents' sin was cruel. Sometimes Jesus did connect sin with suffering. Once he said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." In this case, however, Jesus refused to pronounce judgment.

To Think About: Dr. Maclaren says: "Do not make miserable men theological problems. See in them a call to service. When Jesus saw a blind man he said, 'We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.'"

THE BLIND MAN AND JESUS

Jesus did not look upon the man as a theological problem. He looked upon him as a man who was in need of help. He came to give the blind their sight. "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having declared his purpose, he spat on the ground and made clay and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and bade him go wash in the Pool of Siloam.

There was no display and no miracle wrought as yet. We are not told why Jesus used such means or why he did not immediately bid the blind eyes see, but Jesus had his own way, and doubtless he wished to develop this man's faith in himself. The clay was nothing; the anointing was nothing; the washing in the Pool of Siloam was nothing. The will and the word of Christ were everything. He accommodated himself to the weak faith of the blind man as he always does to those he wishes to lead into a deeper and truer understanding. The means of grace which we use in worship are only to help us in our endeavor to find God. "Baptism, The Lord's Supper, a visible church, outward means of worship, and so on, all these come under that same category. There is no life nor power in them except his will works through them, but they are crutches and helps for a weak and sense-bound faith to climb to the apprehension of the spiritual reality. It is not the clay, it is not the water, it is not the Church, the ordinances, the outward worship, the form of prayer, the sacrament—it is none of these things that have the healing and the grace in them. They are only ladders by which we may ascend to him.

To Think About: Jesus demanded obedience. "Go, wash," he said. This is always the teaching of the Master. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." Notice the action in the verse, "He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

THE BLIND MAN AND THE PHARISEES

The cure was an acknowledged fact. The man "came seeing." There was no denying the fact. The lesson shows the different attitude men take toward facts. They are interpreted and explained in different ways by different men. The neighbors, for example, questioned the identity of the blind man. Doubtless he looked different with his eyes open, and they scarcely recognized him, and it was necessary that he assert his identity. In answer to their query as to how his eyes were opened, he answered in a very simple way, "The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto to me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight."

On the other hand the Pharisees, who could not deny the fact of the miracle, explained it away by saying, "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath." It was a strange argument, but it was the best they could do. It was not a success because it divided

the people, some of them saying, "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?"

On the other hand, some of the Jews, who seemed to be more bitter even than the Pharisees, were not willing to admit the fact of the miracle and so called the man's parents, who testified that he was their son and that he had been born blind and that now he was able to see. They had no explanation of the miracle, but they gave evidence as to the facts. They were afraid lest they should be excommunicated, that is, cast out of the synagogue. When the evidence became clear and convincing, they became angry—and reviled the man who had been healed, saying, "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses." The end of their discussion was that they cast him out, excommunicated him, making him a Jewish outcast.

To Think About: The final answer of the blind man, which was incontrovertible, was, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." No answer could be given to that experience. To be able to say "I know," is to stand upon the solid rock.

THE BLIND MAN'S FAITH

It is interesting to follow the story and to see the development of the faith of the man who was cured of his blindness. At first he was entirely in the dark. He did not see even the face of him who commanded him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. There was something, however, in the voice that bade him obey, and evidently he knew who it was, for he answered the questions of his neighbors by calling the Healer, "the man that is called Jesus."

He did not know anything more about him, but later, in making his defense, he answered the Pharisees by saying, "He is a prophet." Little by little the man's faith grew, and it grew because of opposition and the necessity to defend the Man who had healed him. When the Jews asserted that the man who had healed him was a sinner, he said, "Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," and later in the discussion, when it began to become more acute, he said: "Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

After the man had been excommunicated Jesus found him, and asked him the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and when Jesus disclosed himself to the man, immediately there was a confession of faith full and free, "Lord, I believe." "And he worshipped him."

To Think About: Goethe, the German poet, died with the words on his lips, "More light." Jesus came into the world to give light to

those that are in darkness, and he alone is able to answer the prayer, "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom."

FAITH AND UNBELIEF

The effect of the miracle was varied. It angered and embittered the Pharisees and the other Jews, and at the same time it led the disciples and the blind man himself into a deeper and truer faith. The same miracle produced in different people different results. This is the meaning of the words of Jesus, "For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind."

Jesus stands in the midst of life as a judge. He judges men and as they come into contact with him they pass on his right hand or on his left. Indeed, everything judges us. Two people step into a library or into an art gallery or into a music hall, and immediately they are judged. Music judges us. Art judges us. Literature judges us. We begin to be classed as soon as we come in contact with greatness. The man who entered an art gallery and was leaving it in a critical mood was told by one of the old guards in the gallery: "These pictures are not on trial. The visitors are."

To Think About: In "The Arabian Nights" there is a story of a remarkable ointment which, if rubbed on the eyes, caused the person to see all the rich and beautiful things of the world: the gold in the mine; the diamonds in the mountain; the beauty of flowers in the desert. The gospel of the grace of God is this ointment, and when we see in the light which Christ gives us, all things become new.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Name the miracles recorded in the Gospels which have to do with the healing of the blind.
2. Trace the development of the blind man's faith in Jesus.
3. Why did Jesus work this miracle on the blind man?
4. Account for the attitude of the Pharisees toward Jesus.
5. Does it matter what interpretation we give to the facts of history and the facts of experience?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the resurrection, and the life."—John 11: 25.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 11: 31-44.

For entire lesson, see John 11: 1-44

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Ma'ry, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to weep there.

32 Ma'ry therefore, when she came where Je'sus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Je'sus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews *also* weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Je'sus wept.

36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

38 Je'sus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Je'sus saith, Take ye away the stone. Mar'tha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Je'sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Je'sus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Ma'ry, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Ma'ry was come where Je'sus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Je'sus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Je'sus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Je'sus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Je'sus said, Take ye away the stone. Mar'tha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Je'sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Je'sus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'a-rus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'a-rus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Time—February, A.D. 30. Place—Bethany.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. December 8. John 11: 1-14. The Death of Lazarus.
T. December 9. John 11: 31-44. The Raising of Lazarus.
W. December 10. I Kings 17: 17-24. The Raising of the Widow's Son.
T. December 11. II Kings 4: 29-37. The Raising of the Shunammite Child.
F. December 12. Acts 9: 36-43. The Raising of Dorcas.
S. December 13. I Cor. 15: 20-28. Risen with Christ.
S. December 14. Ps. 91: 1-7. The Security of the Godly.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

This lesson brings us near to the close of the life of our Lord. The lesson is within six weeks or two months of the end. It is difficult to follow the movements of Jesus during the preceding months, before he came to the Bethany home where Lazarus had died. There is a section in the Gospel of Luke, from ch. 11 to ch. 17, that is difficult to place in the life of Jesus. It is usually thought that the events recorded there took place in the region of Perea, east of the Jordan, and it was there that Jesus was when the message came from Bethany that his friend Lazarus was sick.

The raising of Lazarus was the last great crisis. Following that great miracle, which could not be gainsaid or denied, the elders of Jerusalem came to the decision to bring the life of Jesus to an end. Their position is disclosed in the closing verses of the chapter. After the raising of Lazarus, Jesus retired again, probably to Perea, and after a month returned to Jerusalem, where he was crucified.

To Think About: Jesus had performed other miracles of resurrection: the daughter of Jaïrus, Mark 5: 35-42; the son of the widow of Nain, Luke 7: 11-15. The raising of Lazarus, however, was the greatest of his miracles and John makes it the concluding climax in the opposition of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

LAZARUS AT BETHANY

The Bethany home was always open to Jesus. We are told that Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. Two other events besides this are told us about the Bethany home. One of them concerns the story of how Jesus came to Bethany, and Martha and Mary entertained him, how Martha was cumbered with much serving, and complained to Jesus about Mary's lack of interest in the things of

the household. The other incident comes later, during the last week of our Lord's life, when Mary anointed Jesus in a Bethany home.

Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus with all their differences: Martha the practical; Mary the patient; and Lazarus the silent; Martha who was busy about many things; Mary who was content to sit at his feet; and Lazarus who was content to suffer. We are told little about Lazarus. He never speaks, and all we know is that he was sick and that his sickness ended in death and that Jesus loved him.

To Think About: Francis E. Clarke, the father of the Christian Endeavor Movement, has a "Welcome" sign over the door of his home, written in thirteen different languages. That is a symbol of true hospitality. The Bethany home was always open to Jesus and his friends, and there they never failed of a welcome.

JESUS AND LAZARUS

We are not told how long Lazarus had been sick, but the sisters in anxiety and love sent a message to Jesus saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus was absent at a distance of a day's journey and it has been suggested that probably Lazarus was dead when the message reached him, for if we estimate a day's journey for the messenger and a delay of two days spoken of in v. 6 and the return journey of a day we have four days, and we are told that when our Lord reached Bethany, Lazarus had been in the grave four days. Burial in that country was immediate.

We are not told why Jesus delayed for two days before answering the urgent message of the anxious sisters. Perhaps there was work for him to do, and doubtless he knew that already Lazarus had died, for his words to his disciples reveal an understanding which is not disclosed in the story. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."

To Think About: Phillips Brooks in preaching upon the resurrection of Lazarus entitled his sermon "A New and Greater Miracle." This means that Jesus might have healed Lazarus with a word, but that he preferred to work a greater and a more appealing miracle, which brought a higher and a better blessing to those he loved.

JESUS AT BETHANY

After four days Jesus came to Bethany and found the village in a tumult of mourning. Many of the Jews had come from Jerusalem to sympathize with and console the desolate sisters in their Bethany home. It was a home of culture and probably of wealth. The ointment which Mary later bestowed upon her Lord, was very precious and costly. Judas was amazed at the extravagance of it all, so that we are led to believe that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus belonged to a home of influence and position.

The news of Jesus' coming had gone before him, and Martha met him somewhere before he reached the house, while Mary remained at home. The first word on Martha's lips was a word of worship, and then a word of regret, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." It revealed a great faith and a great love, but at the same time a great regret. Jesus spoke to her of the resurrection, but for Martha the resurrection was far on in the dim distance. Jesus called her from the future to the present.

Brought face to face with the revelation of present immortality she expressed her belief not only in that immortal life but in Christ himself as the Son of God. Then she called Mary secretly, and Mary, too, came to Jesus and, falling at his feet, expressed the same regret that had been expressed by Martha, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

The agony of Jesus' soul is revealed in the words which are given in the shortest verse of the Bible, "Jesus wept." The people, seeing the deep sorrow not only of the sisters but of Jesus himself, said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?"

To Think About: The shortest verse in the Bible is interesting. It contains the two words, "Jesus wept." Why did he weep? Was it grief and sorrow for the death of Lazarus? That could hardly be, for he knew what he was about to do. Was it sympathy for Mary and Martha? That could hardly be for he knew that Lazarus was to be given back to them. Probably it was his sorrow at the ravages of death, and the unbelief and fear of the people who thought of death as the end of all life and joy and happiness.

JESUS AT THE GRAVE

Jesus commanded that the stone which sealed the sepulcher should be taken away. Martha, always practical, remonstrated, saying that Lazarus had been dead four days and that by this time decay had begun. Jesus, however, proceeded with his own plan and when the stone was removed he lifted his eyes in prayer. "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." Having thus prayed he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Then the miracle happened. "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

It is interesting to follow through the story and see the confident purpose and controlling faith. In answer to Martha's remonstrance, he said, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" All power was given unto him in heaven and in earth, and that power was not limited in any way, for he held and still holds in his hands the keys of death and of the grave.

To Think About: It has been pointed out that the three miracles of resurrection show that Jesus saves unto the uttermost. The daughter of Jaïrus had just died. Jesus raised her from the dead. The son of the widow of Nain was being carried out to burial. Jesus called him back to life. Lazarus, however, had lain in the grave four days, but even then he was not yet beyond Jesus' power.

"THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE"

Mary and Martha believed in the resurrection. It was to them, however, a future event. It would come at the last day. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus had nothing to say about that last great day, but he called Martha's mind from that far-off, distant future to the present abiding reality, that the eternal life belonged to the present, and so he said those words that have brought comfort to all his children, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

He did not say, "I will be," but "I am." The resurrection is a personal experience for those who are living the Christian life. Paul expressed it in these words, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." This miracle produced a profound impression upon the disciples and upon the authorities at Jerusalem. They immediately prepared to put Jesus to death, and never varied from their purpose until that end was accomplished at the cross.

To Think About: Handel, the great musician, died on Good Friday, 1759, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Engraved on his monument are the words which he had set to music that is known throughout all the world, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Tell what you know of the Bethany home.
2. Why did Jesus delay two days after he received the message?
3. Why did Jesus pray before he performed the miracle?
4. What effect had the resurrection of Lazarus upon the people?
5. Why did the resurrection of Lazarus bring things to a crisis?
6. Interpret the words of Tennyson:

> Behold a man raised up by Christ!
> The rest remaineth unrevealed;
> He told it not; or something sealed
> The lips of that Evangelist.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

GOD'S GIFT TO THE WORLD
(CHRISTMAS LESSON)

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3: 16.

TEXT OF LESSON, John 1: 14-18; 3: 16-21.

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

Ch. 1: 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

15 John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me.

16 For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given through Mo'ses; grace and truth came through Je'sus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

* * * * *

Ch. 3: 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

18 He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

Ch. 1: 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Mo'ses, *but* grace and truth came by Je'sus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

* * * * *

Ch. 3: 16 ¶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 ¶ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Time—December, 5 B.C. Place—Bethlehem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. December 15. John 1: 10-18. The Word Made Flesh.
T. December 16. John 3: 16-21. God's Gift to the World.
W. December 17. Luke 2: 1-7. The Babe of Bethlehem.
T. December 18. Luke 2: 8-20. The Vision of the Shepherds.
F. December 19. Matt. 2: 1-10. The Worshiping Wise Men.
S. December 20. Isa. 9: 1-7. The Prince of Peace.
S. December 21. John 1: 1-9. The Living Word.

THE COMING OF CHRIST

We turn aside from following the life of Christ to think of his coming into the world. This is Christmas Sunday, and it is fitting that we should study the purpose of his coming into the world and the mission of his life among the children of men.

In the alternative lesson, chosen for those who wish to follow through in the study of the life of Christ, the story of Zacchæus is the passage selected. That passage concludes with the words, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." There we have Jesus himself announcing the purpose of his coming into the world. Think who he was, "the Son of man," belonging to our humanity, and at the same time the Son of God. Think, too, of the long journey which he took from the Jerusalem that is above to Palestine. Think, too, of his purpose. He came "to seek and to save."

The heart of the gospel is found in these words. The Christian religion introduces us to a seeking and a saving God. We are not introduced to a philosophy that man by seeking and searching finds God, but to a gospel which tells us that God himself initiates and begins our salvation and comes out of his infinite glory into the life of our world to seek and to save, to discover and to redeem men.

To Think About: Try to understand the difference between the religion that speaks of a seeking God and the religion that puts the emphasis on man seeking after God.

THE INCARNATION

Each of the Gospels has its own way of introducing us to the coming of Christ. John gives us nothing about the early life of Jesus, but tells us that he lived in the glory of the heavenly life long before his birth. John calls him the "logos," the "word of God," and goes on to tell us that the Word was made flesh. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

This is the Christian doctrine of the incarnation, which means that God revealed himself in human flesh. It is the central doctrine of our Christian faith. God, who through all the ages, had been speaking through his prophets, finally revealed himself perfectly in Jesus Christ. Often that doctrine is referred to in the New Testament.

To Think About: Dean Church, in his sermon on "The Incarnation of God," says: "You may as well divorce the thought from the word in living speech. You may as well divide the soul from the body, and hope to leave the living man, as you may separate from the gospel of the New Testament, from the religion which calls itself Christianity, the belief in the Word made flesh."

LAW AND GRACE

John draws a contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. He speaks of the relation and yet the distinction between Moses and Christ. The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. All down through the Old Testament God was speaking. If you will turn to the first verses of The Epistle to the Hebrews you will find a wonderful outline of the revelation of God to man. Heb. 1: 1, 2.

The Old Testament contains the revelation of the law by which religion is regulated by rules and statutes, by judgments and commandments, and the heart of the Old Testament is the Ten Commandments. The gospel of Jesus Christ, however, is the revelation of grace. What is grace? It is the unmerited favor of God. Jesus came to disclose to us that God's gracious love had gone out after men, seeking and saving them.

To Think About: Read Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." It is the story of a soul that is pursued by God, by his love and favor. It is a picture of man as a fugitive fleeing from God, and God pursuing until the man is discovered and captured by love.

THE REVELATION OF GOD

A striking verse in the lesson contains the words "No man hath seen God at any time." That is a true statement. God is invisible, unseen, but not unknown. For this reason, men in all ages of the world have resorted to idolatry, and we have been told again and again that idols are not gods themselves, but are symbols of the unseen deity.

In a similar way in all ages of the world symbolic worship has been instituted, by means of which the invisible Presence may be made known and realized. The Christian doctrine supplies this need of our lives. Jesus is the expressed Image of God. He takes the place for us of all symbols and all idols. He has manifested God, and in the words of the lesson text, he has declared him.

Jesus repeated this doctrine over and over again in his words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." If we would know God, then all that is necessary is for us to know Jesus. Jesus revealed the Father unto men, and all that we really know of God is owing to what we know of Jesus.

To Think About: In the lesson which we studied concerning the transfiguration a voice out of the clouds said, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him." Let us put the emphasis there. To hear what Jesus might say about God is to receive the final and complete revelation concerning him, whom no man hath seen or can see.

THE GIFT OF GOD

The greatest verse in the New Testament is John 3: 16. What a wonderful verse it is! What great words it contains, and how simple they are: "God"; "loved"; "world"; "Son"; "believeth"; "life."

The heart of the message is that God's love is so great that he gave himself in Christ for a perishing world. All other religions speak to us of a receiving god, and to that receiving god, men of other faiths offer the best they have in sacrifice. The Christian faith gives us not a receiving God but a giving God. From his hand come all good gifts, and the Gift which we celebrate on Christmas. Everything that could be done or can be done has been done by the love of God, and we are asked on our part to receive, to believe, and to lay hold upon that Gift.

To Think About: This greatest of verses answers the question which was asked by the lawyer, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

THE GIFT OF GOD

The Gift of God has been given. Christ has come, and now in the midst of life he stands as the Judge and Arbiter of men. He is set for the rising and falling of many. Those who believe in him find life eternal. Those who follow him walk in the light. Those who refuse to follow abide in darkness. He is the Judge to whom all must go. Wherever Christianity goes light springs up. Wherever Christianity is absent darkness abides.

To Think About: What Christmas hymn do you like best and why? Is it true that in a certain sense all Christian hymns are Christmas hymns?

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How does the Christmas story in John's Gospel differ from those in the other Gospels?
2. If you were asked to prove your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God what would be your answer?
3. Do you think the deeper meaning of Christmas is lost sight of in the observance of Christmas?
4. How would you improve on our observance of Christmas?

THE SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

REVIEW: CENTRAL PERIOD OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

THE GOLDEN TEXT: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." —John 14: 9.

DAILY HOME READINGS

M. December 22. Matt. 10: 1-8. The Choice of the Twelve.
T. December 23. John 6: 1-15. The Feeding of the Five Thousand.
W. December 24. Matt. 16: 13-20. Peter's Confession.
T. December 25. Luke 2: 8-20. The First Christmas.
F. December 26. Luke 9: 28-36. The Transfiguration.
S. December 27. John 11: 31-44. The Raising of Lazarus.
S. December 28. Matt. 25: 31-46. The Judgment Day.

THE CRISIS OF HISTORY

The period covered in the lessons of the quarter is the central part of the life of Christ. It covers the main facts of his public ministry from the choosing of the twelve disciples to the raising of Lazarus.

To Think About: Justin Martyr, who lived between A.D. 100-165, in speaking of the early spread of Christianity, says, "There is not a race of men, barbarian or Greek, nay, of those who live in wagons, or who are nomads, or shepherds in tents, among whom prayers are not offered to the Father and Maker of the universe, through the name of the crucified Jesus."

THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

Jesus' main mission during his ministry was to train his disciples so that they might carry on his ministry after his death. He intrusted the proclamation of his gospel to a few loyal men. Had they failed, humanly speaking, the gospel would have failed. Our first lesson introduces us to the twelve disciples. Jesus himself instructed them and sent them out on missionary journeys. To them and to others Jesus gave the instructions contained in the Sermon on the Mount, which was the subject of our second lesson.

Gradually these twelve men learned to know the secret of Christ's life, and to them he disclosed the mystery of his personality. In the seventh lesson he asked them the central question of the gospel, "Who say ye that I am?" and there Peter made that confession which has become the central confession of the Christian Church.

To Think About: Explain the meaning of these words:

"If Jesus Christ is a man
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him—
And to him I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is God
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air."

TEACHING BY PARABLES

The third, fifth, and ninth lessons in the quarter have to do with three of the great parables by which our Lord sought to teach the multitude. The parable of the Sower was Jesus' interpretation of the crowd. The parable of the Prodigal Son meant that the children of men were the children of God, and joy came to the heart of God through the restoration of his wandering children. The parable of the Good Samaritan brought men face to face with their duty and the brotherhood of all humanity.

To Think About: Think through the Twenty-third Psalm and see how many pictures you can select from the wording of that short passage. All great teaching has used imagination.

TEACHING BY MIRACLES

The fourth, sixth, tenth, and eleventh lessons in the quarter contain the record of four of Jesus' miracles. John in his Gospel calls all the miracles which he describes "signs." They are signs that have spiritual significance. The stilling of the storm is a sign that Jesus speaks peace to the troubled heart and the troubled world. The feeding of the five thousand is a sign, or symbol, of the Bread of life. The healing of the blind man preaches a sermon to us concerning Jesus as "the light of the world," and the raising of Lazarus from the dead is the sign of him who is "the resurrection, and the life."

To Think About: What is the greatest of all the miracles? Is it not the life, person, and character of Jesus himself? Who was he? Whence came he?

TEACHING BY REVELATION

The eighth lesson contains the story of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, and the revelation which it contained concerning the person and death of our Lord. It lifted, as it were, the veil that hid the glory of Christ from those who walked with him in the days of his flesh, and revealed him to them in all his glory.

The Christmas lesson contains the revelation of the incarnation. God was manifested in human flesh, and dwelt among us.

To Think About: Dr. Maclaren, in speaking of the life of Christ, says, "The cross is the center of the world's history; the incarnation of Christ and the crucifixion of our Lord are the pivot round which all the events of the ages revolve."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Give in your own words a definition of a parable.
2. What is a miracle?
3. What is Christianity?
4. Who is Jesus Christ?
5. What place does the death of Christ have in the Gospels?

CORRELATED TOPICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETINGS OR EXPRESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Topic for October 5, 1924. Training Through Service. Matt. 10: 5-8

Training the Twelve

1. How much training for service did the disciples have before Jesus chose them?
2. What methods did Jesus use in teaching them to be his disciples?
3. How much use did Jesus make of precept?
4. What use did he make of example?
5. What was the teaching value of sending forth the disciples?

Learning by Doing

1. Of what value is the theory of piano-playing without practice?
2. What is the relative time which an athletic coach gives to lecturing the players and to directing the drills?
3. Why does a salesmanship course make so much of actual selling?
4. Why must an Annapolis graduate take "further training afloat"?

Christians in Training

1. What is the value of an expressional society?
2. Why must Christianity be a practical thing?
3. At what time of life should Christian training be done?
4. What can you do to make your society more efficient?

A Possible Project

Check up on projects already begun, and plan to do the work as thoroughly as possible.

Topic for October 12, 1924. How to Pray. Matt. 6: 5-15

'Jesus' Instructions on Prayer

1. How much did the disciples know about prayer before Jesus taught them?
2. What concrete instance of how not to pray did he give them?
3. How does prayer "for show" break down the very foundations of prayer?
4. What are the advantages of praying in secret?
5. How does the knowledge that "God is a Spirit" help us in praying?
6. What can be learned about the essentials of prayer from a study of The Lord's Prayer?

Method in Prayer

1. Should there be a difference between private and public prayer? Why?
2. Why should public prayer be brief, definite, and social?
3. Should a public prayer contain confession of personal sin? Why?
4. What, besides petitions, may rightly enter into prayer?
5. When is the best time to pray?
6. What is the value of the individual morning watch?
7. What advantages has family worship?

A Possible Project

Let the members of the society pledge themselves to keep the morning watch

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Topic for October 19, 1924. Sowing the Gospel Seed. Mark 4: 1-9

The Nature of the Seed

1. Why do we speak of the gospel as "seed"?
2. What is the gospel?
3. What is in the gospel which makes it so fruitful?

The Presbyterian Church and the Seed

1. What Boards of our denomination are concerned with sowing the gospel seed at home and abroad?
2. Name the races and fields to which the Board of National Missions ministers.
3. Tell what you know of rural work, immigrant work, Negro work, Indian work, Alaskan work, Southern-Mountain work, Spanish work in the Southwest, Cuban work, Porto Rican work, Mormon work, Jewish work, migrant-labor work, chaplains, and Orientals.
4. Name the fields in which the Board of Foreign Missions is at work.
5. Look up in the volume of Board Reports, which your pastor will lend you, the statistics concerning the various types of missionary work, such as medical, educational, literary, industrial, and evangelistic.

Some Possible Projects

1. List the different types of work done by missionaries, and give a reason for doing each particular type.
2. Take an imaginary trip around the world, using a world map, visiting national- and foreign-mission fields as indicated on the map. At each station some one may impersonate a missionary and give a

brief story of his or her particular field. Costumes may be used effectively.

3. Encourage prayer for missionaries, especially using "The Year Book of Prayer for Missions."

Topic for October 26, 1924. Christ in Life's Crises. Mark 4: 35-39

A Crisis on the Sea

1. What did the disciples do when the boat began to fill?
2. What did their words imply?
3. What shows that Jesus cared for them at this critical time?

When We Need Christ Most

1. At what times do we especially need Christ's help?
2. Why do we need Christ in making decisions?
3. Why should we seek Christ's help in choosing a life partner?
4. How may Christ help when friends fail?
5. What consolations has Christ to offer when financial reverses come? when physical misfortunes befall us?

A Possible Project

Let the society go, in the name of Christ, to sing at a hospital or an infirmary.

Topic for November 2, 1924. Sin: What It Is and What It Does. Luke 15: 11-16

Sin

1. Recall the definition of sin which The Shorter Catechism gives.
2. Is there a definition of sin in the Bible? Where?
3. From a study of the parable of the Prodigal Son, what would you say sin is?

The Results of Sin

1. What are the results of sin?
2. "This Book will keep me from sin; sin will keep me from this Book," is a good motto to write in your Bible. From what else does sin keep us?
3. What are the physical effects of sin?
4. What are the moral results of sin?
5. What are the spiritual consequences of sin?
6. What escape is there from the terror and power of sin?

A Possible Project

Continue the project begun last week. Let the members feel as they go among those who are passing through crises that they are

ambassadors of the Saviour from sin, to show his sympathy and to serve in his name.

Topic for November 9, 1924. The Virtue of Saving. John 6: 4-13

"The Broken Pieces"

1. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do after the five thousand had been fed?
2. How much was saved?
3. What, do you suppose, was done with the salvaged portion of bread?

"That Nothing Be Lost"

1. Why did orders to save food go forth during the World War?
2. To what extent is wastefulness of foodstuffs carried on to-day?
3. Why is waste a sin?
4. Consider this proposition: If people would save what ordinarily goes to waste, and would give it to those in need, there would be less suffering.

Some Possible Projects

Let the society find a mission which can use cast-off clothing and which has a furniture exchange. The society can act as a clearing house for the church in the matter of making available for use the surplusage of the homes in the community.

Find out whether the Sunday school of your church has any arrangement for sending the surplus materials of the school to the World's Sunday School Association. If it does not have such a plan, arrange to send all such materials to the Superintendent of Surplus Materials, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City. Write first for information, inclosing a stamp for reply.

Topic for November 16, 1924. The Church's Confession of Christ. Matt. 16: 13-20

A Good Confession

1. What was Peter's confession of Christ?
2. What made Peter's confession stand out so prominently?
3. Defend this statement: Peter was a good witness for Christ.

The Church's Witness to the World

1. How has the Church been bearing witness to the world?
2. Who commissioned the Church to confess Christ among all the nations?

3. To what extent has the Church carried out the commission?
4. What part has the Presbyterian Church in witnessing for Christ among the nations?

For Special Reports and Discussion

Have several people prepare beforehand:

To tell the stories of two or three great modern missionaries at home or abroad. Where did they bear witness for Christ, how, and with what results?

Tell briefly of the work of one great mission station at home or abroad. An interesting chart might be made to illustrate the work.

Tell the stories of two or three people won to Christ through our missionary work. For information see the annual reports of the Mission Boards, "Pen Pictures of Our Foreign Missions" (one on each mission), "Home Lands," "All the World," and other leaflet material of the Mission Boards.

Topic for November 23, 1924. Worship and Service. Luke 9: 33-43

Mountain Top and Valley

1. Explain Peter's desire to remain on the mountain.
2. What experiences similar to that of Peter have you had?
3. Why was Peter's plan rejected by the Master?
4. What took place when Jesus and the three disciples went down from the mountain into the valley?

Religion: Passive and Active

1. What two phases has all true religious experience?
2. Read Isa. 6: 1, 2, and notice that each seraphim had three pairs of wings: two pairs they used in the act of worship about the throne, and the third pair they used in going on errands for God.
3. What is the relation between worship and service?
4. Compare the church with its worship services, to an electric power house. Compare the service which is done by the Church in the community and the world to the work performed by the dynamo in running cars and other machinery. What do you think of these comparisons?

A Possible Project

Let the members of the society check up on their church attendance. If the society is not doing much in the way of service, see if the cause is not due to lack of interest in the prayer and praise meetings of God's house.

Topic for November 30, 1924. How to Be a Neighbor. Luke 10: 29-37

"Who Is My Neighbor?"

1. Why did the lawyer ask Jesus who his neighbor was?
2. In what form did Jesus give his answer?
3. What answer did the lawyer make to his own question?

A Lesson in Neighborliness

1. What are some of the practical points concerning neighborliness brought out in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
2. Is this a good principle to follow: Be neighborly to anyone in need? Why?
3. What difference is there between being neighborly in the Christian sense and the ability to get along with other people?
4. Why is it unchristian to withhold aid from others on account of racial or sectarian prejudice?

A Possible Project

Let the society engage in some activity that will include all the young people of the community, regardless of race or condition.

Topic for December 7, 1924. The Means of Grace. John 9: 1-7

Ladders That Lead to God

1. Why were the clay and the washing used by Jesus to give sight to the man born blind?
2. Why are outward signs helps to the inner spiritual growth?
3. Look up and read again the quotation in the day's lesson in the Quarterly at the close of the second paragraph, under the heading, "The Blind Man and Jesus."

Practical Spiritual Helps

1. What are the means of grace?
2. Learn the answer to the following question in "The Shorter Catechism": "What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?"
3. How does churchgoing help a man to be a better Christian?
4. How do Bible-reading and prayer aid in spiritual development?
5. "What is a sacrament"? "Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?" "What is baptism?" "What is the Lord's Supper?" Look up and learn the answers to these questions in "The

Shorter Cathechism." What blessings have you derived from the sacraments?

A Possible Project

Let the society undertake to bring into active Church membership all its members who are not members of the Church, so that they may be able to take part in the celebration of the next Lord's Supper as members in full standing.

Topic for December 14, 1924. How Does God Answer Prayer? John 11: 17-22

A Woman's Prayer Answered

1. What did Martha desire that Jesus should do for her brother Lazarus?
2. What words of Martha show that this was her prayer?
3. Although Martha's hope, that the Master would come before her brother died, was not realized, her wish was granted—her brother was restored to life. What should this teach us in regard to our prayers?

When We Pray

1. What instances of answered prayer have you experienced?
2. Why would it be disastrous to us if God would answer all our prayers in the way that we desire to have them answered?
3. What kind of prayers does God answer?
4. Does God sometimes answer prayer according to our expectations? Give instances.
5. In all our prayers, what should be the relation of our wills to the will of God?

A Possible Project

Let the members who have joined the Comrades of the Quiet Hour tell of answered prayers. This should stimulate the whole society, and all should join in daily prayer and Bible-reading.

Topic for December 21, 1924. Giving Life to the Nations. John 3: 16, 17; Matt. 2: 10, 11

Life Offered

1. Whom did God send into the world to make the abundant life available to mankind?
2. What is "eternal life"?
3. How widely offered is this gift of life?
4. What phases of human life are to be touched by Christ?

The Universal Gift of Life

1. How is Christ, through his Church, reaching the physical life of the nations?
2. What is being done for the industrial and social life of peoples and nations?
3. How is Christ touching the intellectual life of the world?
4. What is being done in the name of Christ to give spiritual life to the nations?

A Possible Project

Make a survey, showing how Christ is touching the physical, industrial, social, and intellectual life of your community. Suggest other work that might be done. What is the influence of the Church and other institutions, in schools, in factories, on farms, in shops of your neighborhood?

Topic for December 28, 1924. Jesus Our Teacher. Matt. 13: 1-9

Jesus Teaching His Disciples

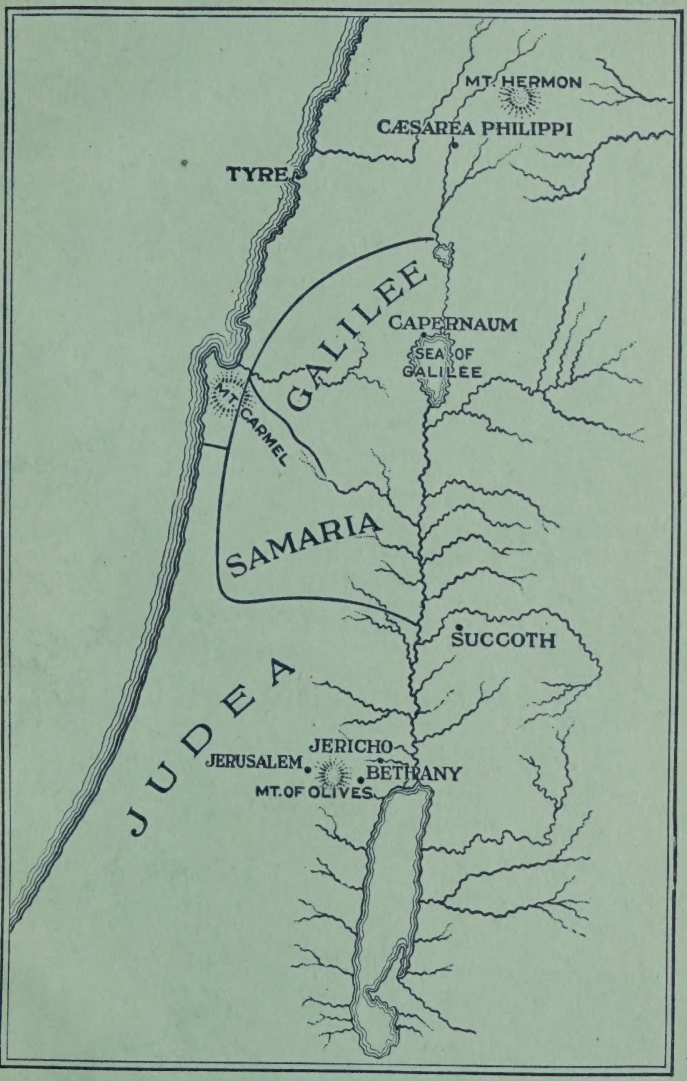
1. What did Jesus teach his disciples?
2. What is the Kingdom of heaven?
3. What did Jesus teach about humility?
4. What did he teach about service?
5. What did he teach about prayer?
6. What did he teach about salvation?
7. What did he teach about money and its uses?
8. What did he teach about the future life?
9. What methods did Jesus use in teaching?

Jesus Teaching Us

1. How does Jesus teach us?
2. What attitude should we take toward the teachings of Jesus?
3. What effect should Jesus' teachings have on our lives?
4. What is the best evidence that we have been taught at the feet of the Master?

A Possible Project

Let the members of the society pledge themselves to the service of the Sunday school, and join a teacher-training class.


MT. HERMON
CÆSAREA PHILIPPI
TYRE
GALILEE
CAPERNAUM
SEA OF GALILEE
MT. CARMEL
SAMARIA
SUCCOTH
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JERICHO
JERUSALEM
BETHANY
MT. OF OLIVES

Y. P.

The International Sunday School Lessons

UNIFORM SERIES FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, 1925

The Life of Jesus (Harmony of the Gospels)
Closing Period of Christ's Ministry

January 4.—Christ's Triumphal Entry.
Lesson Material: Luke 19: 29-40.

January 11.—The Last Judgment.
Lesson Material: Matt. 25: 31-46.

January 18.—The Lord's Supper.
Lesson Material: Luke 22: 14-23.

January 25.—Jesus Comforts His Disciples.
Lesson Material: John 14: 1-17.

February 1.—The Vine and the Branches.
Lesson Material: John 15: 1-11.

February 8.—Christ's Intercessory Prayer.
Lesson Material: John 17: 1-13.

February 15.—Jesus in Gethsemane.
Lesson Material: Mark 14: 32-42.

February 22.—Good Citizenship. (Temperance Lesson.)
Lesson Material: Rom. 13: 1-10, 13, 14.

March 1.—Christ Before Pilate.
Lesson Material: Matt. 27: 11-26.

March 8.—The Saviour on the Cross.
Lesson Material: Luke 23: 33-46.

March 15.—Our Lord's Resurrection.
Lesson Material: John 20: 1-16.

March 22.—The Forty Days and the Ascension.
Lesson Material: Luke 24: 36-53.

March 29.—Closing Period of Christ's Ministry.